



The Retrospective Methods Network

RMN

Newsletter

Approaching Methodology

Edited by Frog and Pauliina Latvala

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APPROACHING METHODOLOGY

Preface and Acknowledgements

Approaching Methodology is the first special issue of *RMN Newsletter*. *RMN Newsletter* appeared in response to the need for a medium of contact and communication for members of the Retrospective Methods Network (RMN). The test of the interest in and viability of this publication resulted in a remarkable and unexpected response from scholars around the world – from places as diverse as India, Australia, North America and South Africa. This revealed that the publication not only filled an immediate need for the RMN, but that it simultaneously met a much broader international interest.

RMN Newsletter is published by Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki, and on February 1st, 2011, a session of the department's research seminar was devoted to a discussion of this publication, its potential as a resource, the direction it was headed and how to negotiate that direction with contributors and the readership. At this seminar, Professor Emerita Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj (University of Turku) emphasized that, however important they are, method and methodology have always been challenging for researchers. Kaivola-Bregenhøj suggested that these challenges should be directly addressed in *RMN Newsletter* by preparing a special issue devoted to methods and methodology, a suggestion complemented by Carsten Bregenhøj's contribution to the discussion. This was the seed of *Approaching Methodology*.

The editorial staff of *RMN Newsletter* had observed the challenges described by Kaivola-Bregenhøj in earlier submissions to *RMN Newsletter* and at the RMN's 2010 meeting (Bergen, Norway). The RMN is united by an interest in the problems, approaches, strategies and limitations related

to considering some aspect of culture in one period through evidence from another, later period: 'retrospective' methods. Such comparisons range from investigating historical relationships to the utility of analogical parallels, and from comparisons across centuries to developing working models for the more immediate traditions behind limited sources. Nevertheless, methods and methodology received surprisingly little focused attention: they tended to be more implicit than explicit; scholars exhibited a general inclination to emphasize results rather than means. A special issue provided an excellent strategy for stimulating discussion in this problematic area. Pauliina Latvala (University of Helsinki) was invited to be a guest editor of the special issue with Frog (University of Helsinki), and together they immediately set about organizing the publication project.

For making the *Approaching Methodology* publication project possible, we would like to thank the contributing participants: Jill Bradley (Radboud University, Nijmegen), Rebecca M.C. Fisher (University of Sheffield), Vladimir Glukhov[†] & Natalia Glukhova (Mari State University), Erin Michelle Goeres (Oxford University), Haukur Þorgeirsson (University of Iceland), Kirsi Laurén (University of Eastern Finland), Helen F. Leslie (University of Bergen), Thelma Lazo-Flores (Ball State University), Francisco Martinez Ibarra (Towson University), Mathias Nordvig (University of Aarhus), Emily Osborne (Cambridge University), Sonja Peterson-Lewis (Temple University), Dani Schrire (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Espen Suenson (Åbo Akademi), Venla Sykäri (University of Helsinki) and Fjodor Uspenskij (Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy

of Science Moscow, and Higher School of Economics); and also the consulting participants: Daniel Sävborg (University of Tartu) and Michael Bates (University of Sheffield). Without the hard work and motivation of these individuals, this project would not have been possible. We would also like to thank the external respondents to the working papers of the collection: Joonas Ahola (University of Helsinki), Tonya Kim Dewey (University of Bergen), Henning Fjørtoft (Norwegian University of Science and Technology), Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson (National Historical Museum, Stockholm), Karina Lukin (University of Helsinki), Emily Lyle (University of Edinburgh), Debbie Potts (Cambridge University), Jyrki Pöysä (Finnish Literature Society), and Ulla Savolainen (University of Helsinki). The insights, perspectives and understandings of these individuals played an

essential role in the development of the working papers into the present collection. We are grateful to Helen F. Leslie (University of Bergen) and Mathias Nordvig (University of Aarhus) for their assistance and hard work in the final stages of editing the collection and for the Herculean effort required in those last weeks to meet our publication deadline. Finally, we would like to thank our friends and colleagues, both those concentrated at the Department of Folklore Studies of the University of Helsinki and those spread internationally around the globe, for their support and enthusiasm through the process of bringing this project to fruition.

Frog and Pauliina Latvala
May 25th, 2012
Helsinki, Finland

RMIN

Opening Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue: A Virtual Workshop on Methodology

Frog, University of Helsinki, in collaboration with Pauliina Latvala, University of Helsinki

Interests and priorities in a range of intersecting research disciplines have been changing rapidly. Methods and methodologies have become an increasing concern, yet discussions on these issues have been developing to some degree independently of one another in different fields and in the research traditions of different countries. The Retrospective Methods Network emerged with a concern for functional methods as well as the problems and approaches to methodologies. We are therefore opening an international, multidisciplinary discussion on method in the emerging discourse space of *RMN Newsletter* with this special issue. The venue of *RMN Newsletter* allows and promotes engagement in vital cross-disciplinary dialogue, both within the current collection and also in future issues, where scholars may contribute responses to pieces published here.

Approaching Methodology is a coordinated, multidisciplinary collection of short essays on different methods, methodologies and the problems and potentialities accompanying them. It consists of eighteen articles by nineteen international scholars representing widely diverse academic traditions. These scholars are united by the challenges and possibilities that methods and methodologies pose both to specific undertakings and more abstractly or generally. In accordance with the theme of the project, a new and alternative 'virtual workshop' method was tested and developed for the coordination of contributions in this multidisciplinary collection.¹

The virtual workshop opened with more than twenty participants, expanding to more than thirty as respondents were invited internationally to engage in discussion of the developing papers. Participants represented many disciplines and national traditions of scholarship. The editors promoted opening and exploring the intersections of issues of method and methodology across these diverse research areas and topics. This was done with the hope that the diverse perspectives would prove reciprocally informative, leading to

unexpected insights and innovations and the production of new knowledge. This same process would lead *Approaching Methodology* to be a unified collection of multidisciplinary relevance.

The present paper stood outside of the discussion and debates of the virtual workshop. It presents instead an introduction to the virtual workshop method through which the collection was produced. This introduction includes a metadiscursive discussion of the implementation, execution and evolution of this method as an experiment in the *Approaching Methodology* project. The metadiscursive quality of this discussion extends to the theme of the workshop. As a consequence, this introduction will open by outlining some problematics of academic discourse on method and methodology that are at the foundations of the *Approaching Methodology* project. It will then turn to the challenges of opening cross-disciplinary discussion. Finally, it will present the virtual workshop method and the present case of its implementation as a strategy for overcoming those challenges.

Some Distinctions and Definitions

A central reason for opening cross-disciplinary discussion on these topics is that questions of method and methodology often prove both problematic and elusive. 'Method' easily becomes conflated with theory, questions or goals of research, and also with argumentation. Not uncommonly, 'method' and 'methodology' are treated as synonyms without recognizing any distinction between them at all. Methods frequently remain unspoken as 'self-evident' and/or customary sets of strategies that have either evolved through the history of discourse in a field or they are narrower (and sometimes rather loose) imitations of the strategies of more prominent scholars. Methodology, on the other hand, is often not just unspoken, but also unconscious, importing associations, inferences and valuations that shape conscious analysis. Moreover, disparities between the methodology employed in

research and the methodological arenas in which primary and secondary sources and literature were produced are frequently unrecognized and misunderstood, potentially compromising argument or leading to unfair criticisms. These problems are all largely attributable to a low awareness of or sensitivity to issues related to method and methodology on the one hand, and on the other to an undeveloped distinction between them in intersections and interactions with other concepts. A general model relating method and methodology to and distinguishing these from other concepts will therefore preface the presentation of a virtual workshop *on* methods and methodology.

The term *method* derives from Classical Greek μέθοδος. This is the contracted form of μετά ὁδός [‘following after, pursuit’], and defined more narrowly as the “pursuit of knowledge, investigation” and – by association – the “mode of prosecuting such inquiry, method, system” (Liddell & Scott 1996: s.v. ‘μέθοδος’). In Modern English, a method can be any

special form of procedure adopted in any branch of mental activity, whether for the pursuit of teaching and exposition or for that of investigation and inquiry. (*OED* s.v. ‘method’.)

In a scientific context, emphasis falls on a systematic use of the procedure, with the implication that the particular method will be applied objectively and consistently across all data. In the humanities, however, many methods rely heavily on subjective considerations of the researcher (e.g. qualitative analysis). In addition, the diversity of data addressed in a single investigation may require selecting the method or methods to be applied on an almost case-by-case basis (cf. Bradley, this volume). Different methods may also be employed in a complementary fashion. For example, the selection, organization and analysis of data may involve three discrete methods applied in a simple linear sequence (cf. Nordvig, this volume). Different methods may be required by a diversity of data (Lakomäki, Latvala & Laurén 2011: 7–10), or desired in order to construct a more dynamic model by

triangulating multiple methods in tandem (Martínez Ibarra, this volume). These may subsequently be addressed within a hierarchy or hierarchies of methods of varying scope, and with varying degrees of dialogue between them (e.g. Apo 2001; Glukhov & Glukhova, this volume). For purposes of research, a method may be described as *a prescriptive set of techniques, strategies and their relationships in application to appropriate material*. Put simply, a method in research is the particular and definable ‘what’ and ‘how’ of doing something *to* something else, such as producing data from a raw social environment or producing information (and thereby knowledge) from selected data through its organization and/or analysis.

Methods for the selection or analysis of data are not unbiased: they are functional tools oriented to goals of a researcher. As a consequence, they are often conditioned by their complementary relation to another method or other methods of analysis and associated research priorities of *interpretation*. Interpretation is the ascription of meaningfulness to data, whether at the level of raw data being identified (and hence defined) and categorized, or at the outcome of analysis, followed by the translation of that meaningfulness into language – clarifying or explaining. Interpretations normally follow from *research questions* or *research goals*, which inform the priorities of interpretation (cf. Osborne, this volume). It may seem self-evident that research questions about syntax or navigation will not normally lead to interpretations about gender roles, even if these are reflected in the data: questions unasked in an investigation will normally remain unanswered. Method provides the bridge from research questions/goals to the interpretations of information pursued as the final outcome of an investigation. It is not simply a tool, but a tool *effective for doing certain things more than others* (cf. Frog, this volume). Method therefore becomes shaped by the intentionality of answering particular research questions or responding to certain research goals, whether at stages of analysis and interpretation or already in the selection of data. The shaping of methods is frequently a historical process that may span generations

of scholars (cf. Foley 1988). As a consequence, methods become preconditioned to the production of information or data that is relevant and appropriate to certain types of interpretation and certain interpretive research goals.

The ability of a method to be predicated to an interpretive goal and interpretive framework is dependent on its interface with *theory*: theory provides the basic models of understanding within which the method and its application are ascribed validity and against which the information produced by that application can be appropriately interpreted. As Espen Suenson puts it:

a theory explains what is relevant about the subject matter and how the relevant parts relate to each other. It is a point of departure for our understanding. Thus, theory ideally tells us how we expect things to be before we start an investigation into the matter. (Suenson, this volume: 9.)

In constructing a bridge from research questions to interpretation on the framework of understanding provided by theory, method also interfaces with *argument*. The term *argument* derives from Latin *argumentum*:

The means by which an assertion or assumption may be made clear, proved, an argument, evidence, proof (and in particular, that which rests upon facts, while *ratio* is that which depends upon reasoning). (Lewis & Short 1969: s.v. 'argumentum'.)

In its most ideal form, argument is the explanation that answers a research question by explaining, in accordance with theory, the production of information through the use of method and its interpretation (cf. Kaakkuri-Knuuttila & Hakonen 1998 [2007]: 63). Difficulties in distinguishing between method and theory, method and argument and even method and interpretation – blurring the boundaries between these in discussion – appears related to the fact that all of these together form a complex and interconnected system in which method never functions independently.

The distinction between method and *methodology* has generally proven still more challenging. Methodology originally referred to “the branch of knowledge that deals with

method generally or with the methods of a particular discipline or field of study” (see *OED*: s.v. ‘methodology’). It is now often used simply as ‘a method or body of methods used in a particular field of study or activity and how these are used’, which is a significant factor in the term’s varying use across research disciplines. The understanding of this term has evolved rapidly in the wake of Post-Modernism. Through the emergence of fields of area studies such as Women’s Studies, methods have been increasingly highlighted as tools – resources – that can be employed across different disciplines rather than characterizing them. As a consequence, the term ‘methodology’ has adapted to refer to how methods are used by or in a particular discipline, field of study or school. Within this frame, Sonja Peterson-Lewis highlights that:

[A] *methodology* consists of the underlying network of philosophies, beliefs and values – the worldviews – that shape and inform how the researcher conceptualizes the problem and how and with whom he/she implements the method. (Peterson-Lewis, this volume: 60.)

Methodology thus extends beyond the bridge-building interface of theory and method to the broader ideologies in which these are situated. As such, a methodology can never be wholly unbiased in research practice: even ideals of objectivity are bound up with intentionality, both in research processes and in the use of research products. This includes valuations of what research questions are or are not worthy of attention, what interpretive goals are or are not interesting, hierarchizing particular methods and their uses, and so on. Methodology simultaneously constructs and frames a dialogue between theories and methods, providing a means for the production of knowledge. Within that frame, methods provide essential tools by which these processes are regulated and accomplished, while theories supply knowledge and understandings in relation to which methods are applied. Methodology can therefore be described as *an ideological arena* in which the research questions are posed, data is identified, selected and organized,

where theories and methods are deployed and negotiated, data is analyzed, and interpretations are generated (cf. Liljeström 2004: 10).

Methodology and Knowledge Production

Research is, by definition, goal-oriented toward the production and maintenance of knowledge. The relationship of the production of knowledge to methodology is therefore a concern relevant to all research disciplines. Fields of research and approaches to them are demarcated precisely by dominant methodologies (cf. Dark 1995: 196–197). At their interfaces with different research paradigms, these methodologies condition what research is done and in what ways. Consequently, it conditions what research is not done, and thereby areas where knowledge is neither produced nor maintained. This may even lead to response within an academic community (cf. Heide 2010). This is the so-called ‘politics of knowledge production’, which has been particularly prominent in studies related to cultural history and cultural expression. Such research was essential to Romantic nation-building, evolutionary anthropology and its products have been employed as tools in these and other political discourses for centuries. Both methods and methodologies can themselves become politically charged through these processes (cf. Peterson-Lewis, this volume).

The production of knowledge in research is always accomplished within the arena of a methodology and negotiated across methodologies. All research produces knowledge, although it may be subject to different valuations or have different social functions. Prestige areas are ‘innovative’ and ‘ground-breaking’; much knowledge production is a maintenance of existing knowledge, by testing, developing and reinterpreting; even surveys synthesizing and condensing existing knowledge are dependent on a form of knowledge production to the degree that they produce new perspectives (which may be implicit in translating earlier knowledge into the arena accessible to current methodologies). Knowledge production is most easily thought of in terms of ‘conclusions’, the ‘findings’ of a research investigation or ‘interpretations’ that become

socially accepted, handled in later discourses as ‘facts’. The construction of data through collection, selection, editing and representation are more often overlooked in these processes. Nevertheless, the process of identification is itself a process of interpretation and categorization in which the ascription of definitions is implicit (Lakoff 1986). Similarly, representation inevitably involves recontextualization, the distinction of significant from non-significant elements, and their ‘translation’ into a new (ideal) form, which necessarily produces information (Lotman 1990). The collection of folklore or ethnographic data is thus a form of knowledge production, and large, collectively produced archives are certainly not ‘neutral’ representations of cultures and traditions. Methodology plays an essential role in precisely the processes of delimiting and defining the research objects (cf. Kaakkuri-Knuuttila 1998 [2007]: 329), and the methodology of collection (Schrire, this volume) and presentation (Goeres, this volume) constructs the object of research itself, producing the knowledge of that object. This must be acknowledged because whatever sources are used in research – both primary and secondary – the information or knowledge is *always conditioned by one or more methodologies*.

Earlier methodologies may not be compatible with or appropriate to methodologies in the present. Like individual methods, whole methodologies develop in relation to social and historical circumstances. Knowledge is inevitably situated in a cultural and historical present; research practice cannot escape the choices of selection and representation in the production and development of situated knowledge. Sources and earlier studies in use today have been collected, organized and evaluated in different times and places, connecting them to methodologies that interfaced with social, historical and cultural circumstances current at that time. That knowledge may become problematic for current use in the wake of changing paradigms that interface with different dominant methodologies, because that knowledge was conditioned to different questions, different types of answers, and/or

different understandings of the phenomenon addressed (cf. Fisher, this volume). This is particularly apparent in knowledge resources that antedate Post-Modernism. Changes in methodology foregrounded context, situation, the role and identity of the individual, non-dominant perspectives and internal/subjective perspectives and understandings – in general highlighting a diversified spectrum of aspects that had remained largely ‘invisible’ to earlier research (cf. Lotman 1990). The interpretation of historical, cultural and political contexts for making sense of earlier research products has become essential for the appropriate handling of produced knowledge. At the same time, these shifts in paradigms and new awarenesses led to different types of methodological crises (Peterson-Lewis, Sykäri, this volume). As a historical process, new research is filling these gaps, leading to new and more diversified representations of knowledge (cf. Latvala & Laurén, this volume). This new knowledge is nevertheless conditioned by (different) methodologies. Critical deconstruction is therefore crucial in order to frame current argumentation and justify interpretations.

Knowledge production functions as a social process, and it must therefore always interface with socially established frames, reassessing, contesting or revising models within those frame or building from such frames to advance in new or neglected directions. An interface is essential: there must be a connection with socially maintained interests and socially maintained valuations for new knowledge to be recognized as relevant and valid. Areas which have been neglected, devalued or censored by dominant methodologies may be challenging to penetrate and require social networking. Methodology, whether implicit or explicit, plays an essential role in the production and maintenance of knowledge. Each discipline is also dependent on knowledge produced by other disciplines.² Increasing awareness and sensitivity to these processes can help researchers to overcome problems in knowledge production today, and to advance to greater long-term stability and sustainability of knowledge produced and of knowledge production more generally.

Challenges of Cross-Disciplinary Communication

Research disciplines do not exist in isolation from one another. Method and methodology are frequently adapted from one discipline to the next, often under the ægis of broader intellectual movements such as Romanticism or Post-Structuralism. As a consequence, questions and challenges faced in these areas may not only be typologically similar across different disciplines but directly related. Possible solutions may equally hold interdisciplinary relevance. Tensions and difficulties arise because representatives of different disciplines are working from different frames of reference. Each is embedded in a disciplinary discourse that shapes the concerns, priorities and even the very language of its representatives – using the same words in different ways and different words for common concepts. It is from here that methodology derives. Ludwig Wittgenstein (2009: 235, II.xi.327) succinctly describes the problem of incompatible frames in the statement: “Wenn ein Löwe sprechen könnte, wir könnten ihn nicht verstehen” [‘If a lion could talk, we would not be able to understand it’].³ In spite of their interrelationships and interdependence, communication presents an obstacle between disciplines, where their representatives, immersed in a particular academic discourse’s concerns and priorities, effectively speak different languages.

The problem of cross-disciplinary communication was heightened during the movement to disciplinary separatism and specialization across the latter half of the 20th century. Just as methods are shaped within a field as a historical process, so are broader methodologies, along with their conventional priorities and interests in particular research questions, their preferred methods, theories and strategies of argumentation. Within a discipline, changes in methodology result in the obsolescence of particular methods, their devaluation or their complete rejection. Theories which were dominant earlier may no longer provide frameworks appropriate to sustaining the method; ideologies change alignments as well as values, priorities and research interests. These processes

nevertheless occur differently and at different rates within each discipline. Methods that have remained vital in the comparative study of religions have been rejected in fields of medieval literature and medieval oral culture; methods which have remained vital in those fields are rejected by modern folklore studies and anthropology. The more different disciplines became closed to one another, the more these aspects developed independently as a historical process, until they became mutually unintelligible – not simply on the level of language, but methodologically, even to the degree that interest or relevance of the very research questions and research goals seem incomprehensible or absurd. Methods may be adapted over these thresholds, but once adapted, they are adapted to a new methodology and begin their evolution with the next discipline.

Variation between disciplines is complemented by variation across national and cultural borders. Each discipline develops in relation to others in the frame of linguistic and cultural environments, and its knowledge production is impacted by historical processes and identity. Just as disciplines became closed to one another to the degree that they lacked reciprocal communication, the same can be seen on national and international levels: disciplines in Finland differ from those in Sweden, those of the Nordic countries differ from those of the rest of Western Europe, and so forth. For example, Barbro Klein recently stated that, quite simply, folklore studies in Europe and in the U.S. were “different disciplines”.⁴ Similar observations were made in the present project concerning Western scholarship generally and research in the Russian Federation, while humanities research in many parts of India today functions within methodologies that have not been current in Europe for most of a century. This type of variation is a consequence of historical processes in the development of methodologies and their engagement with their objects of research in social (and political) realities, but it is tempered by the history of contact across national and cultural borders.

Disciplinary separatism has now moved in the opposite direction toward interdisciplinary

research. The role of proximity and national adjacence in the development of disciplines is beginning to break down in the wake of electronic technologies. Lack of common frames of reference still remain an obstacle. Not infrequently, a voice from another discipline is heard as a lion’s roar, and what is said seems like ‘jabberwocky’ – excited and incomprehensible talk. The problem of engaging with this beast has been actualized (perhaps unintentionally) by Lewis Carroll (1871 [1970]: 191) in the warning: “Beware the Jabberwock, my son! The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!” Incomprehension is inevitably intimidating, presenting a two-sided threat. The lion’s roar is threatening in itself, as such beasts may bite, and it is easiest to shy away and let the lions speak of lion things. On the other hand, without comprehending its language and methodological frame of reference, using the expressions of a lion and the knowledge it has produced carries the hazard of misunderstanding and error by which the “claws that catch” may inadvertently tear apart an entire argument. Nevertheless, that same obstacle holds great promise. At its most basic, succeeding in communication – negotiating the language barrier to open cross-disciplinary discussion – allows each discipline’s knowledge to be engaged with that of the other. This both provides and grounds resources in research, as well as enabling practical resources for resolving common methodological problems in research practice. The construction of stronger methodological relations across interdisciplinary data will inevitably follow in the wake of this process. More generally, such negotiation becomes a negotiation of methodologies themselves, with the potential to offer new insights and understandings of methodology and its role in knowledge production more generally – if we can get past the lion’s roar.

The Virtual Workshop

A Strategy for Coordinating a Publication

Overcoming disciplinary ‘language’-barriers and opening cross-disciplinary discussion has been a founding aim of *RMN Newsletter*. In accordance with those aims, the publication

project of *Approaching Methodology* became an excellent testing-ground for a method to open these cross-disciplinary discourses. This was the 'virtual workshop' for producing a coordinated publication outside of a conference or seminar. Whereas a publication from a conference often reflects that the participants have gone their separate ways following a meeting, the virtual workshop brings together participants through the alternative means of electronic technologies, unbounded by national borders, and gradually opens discussion between them. However diverse the fields and subjects of the contributions to this collection, they form a web of intersecting interests and concerns. We promoted opening and exploring these intersections in the hope that they would offer unexpected insights and innovations leading to new knowledge and lead *Approaching Methodology* to be a more unified collection of multidisciplinary relevance.

A 'virtual workshop' is a workshop in which participants are brought together through electronic technologies. This virtual workshop method was organized around three phases, initiated following the selection of proposed contributions. It was adapted in relation to the nature of the interdisciplinary collection and also to practical constraints of the time-line for the publication as a special issue of a journal (one year following the initial call for papers). The virtual workshop also evolved in relation to practicalities in implementation.⁵ Frog was responsible for the concept of the virtual workshop method, which was then coordinated and executed with Pauliina Latvala. It was both enjoyed and appreciated by participants and highly successful in coordinating contributions.

Participant Roles

The editors are the organizers and moderators of the virtual workshop. Three additional roles for participants are: contributing participant, consulting participant, and external respondent. All *participants* are involved in the workshop from the start. *Contributing participants* are those who plan and contribute articles to the implemented collection; their abstracts and (later) working papers are circulated for consideration and

discussion among workshop participants. *Consulting participants* are scholars who do not submit articles, but they receive all packages of participant materials and their contact information is circulated in this material so that they may be consulted as specialists. A respondent is a scholar with an official capacity of responding to a specific working paper. This function is equivalent to a peer-reviewer in the virtual workshop environment. Here, most participants were internal respondents for one or sometimes two contributions. *External respondents* are international specialists invited to participate in the virtual workshop as respondents to specific working papers. They are presented with general information about the project and virtual workshop, but they do not receive full packages of participant materials.

The category of consulting participant emerged in the execution of the virtual workshop as a practical strategy. It was initiated *a)* to allow scholars who were interested in contributing an article but uncertain about the time-line to be involved in the project from the beginning; and *b)* to allow editors of the host journal to be fully aware and up to date on the project, its progress and development. The distinction between contributing participant and consulting participant is intentionally fluid, distinguished only by the intention and practice of contributing an abstract and (later) a working paper. A scholar could begin as a consulting participant and advance to a contributing participant during the project, as happened in three cases. This category also allows initial contributing participants to continue as a participant in the project even if plans for a contribution became unviable. The category of consulting participant proved an extremely valuable innovation. On the one hand, more specialists from different fields became available for consultation in the multidisciplinary environment. More significantly, consulting participants made excellent internal respondents: they were already familiar with the project, contributions and participants. In the future, potential respondents might be anticipated at the implementation of the project and invited as consulting participants from the outset.

Structure of the Virtual Workshop

The origin of a collection is a factor in how the phases, around which a virtual workshop is organized, are realized and whether all of them are relevant. In the case of *Approaching Methodology*, the virtual workshop was implemented following the selection of participants on the basis of paper proposals and other responses to the call (i.e. consulting participants). The first phase was the period during which papers were initially prepared. The second phase was the opening of discussion, in which working papers were circulated and during which respondents were active and papers were discussed. The third phase was the period of revision following discussion and the comments of the respondents. The initiation of the first two phases was marked in each case by the closed distribution (i.e. distribution via e-mail rather than publically posted on-line) of a 'package' of materials among participants. Each package of participant materials was in the form of a single pdf document (with table of contents) prepared by the editors. The third phase was marked by the presentation of respondent reports and comments to the authors on an individual basis (i.e. not circulated among all participants). Publication followed directly on the third phase.

The beginning of the first phase (the phase of composition) was marked by the distribution of a package of participant materials that included:

- General information about the priorities and emphasis of the collection
- An explicit statement of the desire to coordinate contributions in the collection
- Participant contact information
- Some basic guidelines about contacting other participants
- The style-sheet
- The time-line
- Long abstracts of participant papers

The statement of desire to coordinate the collection requested participants to actively engage one another's contributions in dialogue, for which participant contact information was provided. The general guidelines for contacting participants included a reminder that the project brought

together experts at many different stages in their careers and with many different responsibilities. Participants may therefore not always be able to respond as quickly or as fully to a question or comment as he or she might like.

Long abstracts (500 words) were requested in order to offer participants a more developed picture of individual papers. It was hoped that this would help authors to develop their contributions in complementary ways at the initial phase of composition while avoiding repetitions and competing discussions within the collection.

The second phase of the virtual workshop strategy (opening general discussion) was initiated following the submission of all contributions. The package of participant materials included all working papers, organized into a single pdf document circulated to participants via e-mail. In this case, the document was around 200 pages, making a table of contents essential. An introduction to the virtual workshop strategy was provided, as well as much of the information initially included with the abstracts in phase one. The (redundant) recirculation of information from the first phase made all relevant information available in a single document. The introduction also included a list recommending four other papers for each contributor to look at. This list was generated by the editors suggesting contributions that the author might find relevant and interesting to relate to his or her own article. Each recommended paper was appended by a note "Concerning:", followed by key-words or a phrase indicating the particular point that might be of interest. This list helped orient each contributor to consider relationships to (at least a few) concrete contributions in the collection. When the number of papers was large and very multidisciplinary, the relevance of a contribution might not otherwise be immediately recognizable on the basis of the title.

The editors organized two respondents for each paper in this phase of the workshop. One respondent approached the paper from the perspective of a specialist, and the other was selected as a non-specialist respondent. A

priority of the collection was cross-disciplinary accessibility. In order to help assure this, the non-specialist helped consider the accessibility of terminology, concepts, methodology and argumentation from outside the discipline. The non-specialist respondent normally had interests and specialization relevant to some aspect of the subject or material addressed in the paper.

Respondents were given a brief overview of the publication project, an introduction to the virtual workshop, and they were provided with a respondent report form. This form asked for a summary of the article, included a list of basic yes/no questions relevant to the editors, and asked that specific comments be divided into “requirements”, “recommendations” and “observations”. Respondents were not provided with any packages of participant materials. In the future, a pdf package of abstracts of the working papers might be recommended in order to provide the respondent with a more concrete frame of reference (e.g. when considering cross-referencing and discussion across papers within the collection). In larger collections, a list of working titles of papers might be a sufficient alternative. The present collection is oriented to opening dialogues and further discussion, and therefore all respondents and participants were offered the opportunity to present a formal response that could appear as an appendix to the article in publication, although none did so.

The respondent system was functionally a process of open peer-review (i.e. the reviewers and contributors were not made anonymous). External factors may formally prescribe single-blind or double-blind peer-review for a collection. Situating that process in a ‘virtual workshop’ with ‘working papers’ where reviewers are identified as ‘respondents’ can nevertheless (potentially) reshape the discourse in a positive way. The vocabulary itself invites positive and constructive feedback over critique and criticism, or at the very least invites proposing solutions to criticisms rather than simply condemnation.

The third phase of the process (the period of revision) was marked by the redistribution of respondent reports (mediated by the

editors) to individual authors. In conjunction with this process, the editors included additional specific comments from the perspective of the collection. In several cases, these comments included concrete suggestions for cross-referencing and engaging other contributions in discussion.

Realities of Opening Dialogues on Methodology

The *Approaching Methodology* publication project faced many challenges. The first and most rudimentary was that the concept and strategies for coordinating contributions for the collection as a whole were unfamiliar. The principles and strategies for coordinating papers and producing an integrated collection of essays through cross referencing other papers and engaging them in discussion are generally unfamiliar and not normally a priority. This is particularly true in cases where the contributors have never met, where they represent diverse disciplines or diverse schools of scholarship, and where they are concerned with different specific topics. *Approaching Methodologies* is all of these.

The first phase of the virtual workshop, in which contributors’ abstracts were circulated, was important in laying the foundations of the collection: “Reading the others’ abstracts was inspiring” (Espen Suenson, e-mail: 7 May, 2012 21:44). The abstracts seem to have played a valuable role in shaping contributions in terms of the collection as a context: working drafts of papers developed in relation to the abstracts – and thereby in relation to the collection. Nevertheless, papers seem not to have developed more directly in relation to one another in this phase: there was no evidence of even minimal cross-referencing between the submitted working papers. This was interpreted as reflecting contributors’ lack of familiarity with the concept and strategies employed for coordinating contributions into a more unified collection. This would presumably change through the engagement in future publication projects as the process and its potential became more familiar, and also as the use of such methods becomes more common in general. Put another way, contributors apparently did not actively engage in the

virtual workshop at this stage because they lacked a frame of reference for how and why to do so.

The second phase of the workshop was received in different ways. First of all, the editors' list of papers recommended to each contributor seems to have had a stimulating effect. For the most part, participants appear to have interpreted this list as required reading for their participation in the virtual workshop. Some later commented in e-mails that when they did not incorporate a particular cross-reference, they sought alternatives. The circulation of working papers also had a more generally stimulating effect. As Emily Osborne remarked:

Knowing that our contributions would be published in the same volume, I was more inclined to engage critically with other papers and to consider correspondences and differences, and reconsider my own approaches. (e-mail: 11 May, 2012 21:22.)

Respondent roles interfaced with this process. Participants and respondents both commented positively on the use of an open peer-review model, although it was also observed that greater thought and care had to be given where criticisms were necessary. Introducing a non-specialist respondent to the process was found stimulating to both research and to discussion. Framing the roles of respondents in the virtual workshop seems to have further stimulated discussion, as comments were not restricted to respondent roles. And Haukur Þorgeirsson remarked, "I liked having the opportunity to comment on several working papers of my choice" (e-mail: 8 May, 2012 13:10).

Inviting and facilitating contributors to open communication directly with one another simultaneously left the editors largely unaware of the number and scope of communications between participants during the development of the collection. It seems, however, that the second phase of becoming familiar with other working papers in the collection was less vital in opening discussion between participants than the third phase, during the revision process. This is in part a practical function of revision and suggestions regarding cross-referencing and opening

dialogue with other papers. The fact that one of the yes/no questions in respondent reports was "Does the manuscript engage other contributions in discussion?" may have highlighted that this should be considered important. Authors were also specifically asked to open contact with one another when engaging other papers in order to at least confirm that the relevant point of reference or discussion would still be relevant in the revised version of the paper. Although communication between contributors generally remained 'behind the scenes', a watershed event was when Jill Bradley sent out a single group e-mail listing the contributors' papers she engaged in her own and on what points. This group e-mail provided an exemplar for fulfilling a task, requested by the editors, of contacting other participants when developing cross-references. It sparked a series of similar e-mails to groups of participants. The conscious introduction of this type of exemplar communication could be employed as a strategy in future virtual workshops: it does not simply present an unassuming means of accomplishing a task; it incites individual participants to open contact with each other *on their own initiative*, and this seems to have been a significant platform for further communication on an individual basis.

The experiment of the virtual workshop method employed in the *Approaching Methodology* publication project has proven successful. As Francisco Martínez Ibarra commented:

I feel in the end the virtual workshop proved to be an essential instrument in order to strengthen cohesion in such an interdisciplinary piece of work. (e-mail: 7 May 2012 19:58.)

This method and strategy has great potential, and Jill Bradley observed:

While the face-to-face contact of conferences is unique, in these days of small budgets, budget cuts, finding your own finance and having to make time and money stretch, virtual workshops could offer a good substitute for those of us with little time and/or finance to become acquainted with other research, other theories, methods and approaches. The eighteenth century had its

'Republic of Letters' so why not a twenty-first century 'Republic of scholarly e-mails'? (e-mail: 4 May 2012 14:58.)

Developing Perspectives through a Virtual Workshop

The present collection attests to the successes of the virtual workshop. The actualization of coordinating contributions through explicit cross-reference appears as only one rather small part of the overall effects of developing the collection within a virtual workshop environment. The circulation of participant materials seems to have had a general stimulating effect on participants, simultaneously inspiring and prompting reflection and reassessment. Although every participant entered the workshop with the ability to speak in the incomprehensible roar of a lion, disciplinary 'lion-speak' was only one possible mode of expression. In practice, a significant part of the workshop was promoting sensitivity to the mode of expression for the translation of 'lion-speak' into a common, interdisciplinary language, and sensitivity to disciplinary and also national/cultural frames of reference for the elucidation of 'the world as seen by the lion'. By negotiating toward common frames of reference in the workshop environment, the potential intimidation of growling beasts shifted to conversations with colleagues. Although disciplinary languages and frames of reference were not always interdisciplinarily accessible, communication opened as a process, negotiating 'translations' of 'lion-speak' and 'the world as seen by the lion' into a common language and common frames of reference.

In our case, contributions developed networks of interrelationships with one another, uniting the whole of the workshop into a more coherent web. Within the workshop as a process, contributions also advanced naturally into constellations as they developed in relation to one another. These constellations are realized in the collection as four thematic sections: *Method in Practice*, addressing a number of generally relevant issues related to data, research questions or research goals, theory, argument and their interface with method, as well as relationships

between method and methodology; *Constructing Data*, examining the production and development of data variously through ethnographic fieldwork and through data selection and editing processes; *Culturally Sensitive Reading*, turning from data construction to analytical approaches to data as the object of research and its relationships to frames of culture and more specific contexts; and *Function, Structure and Statistics*, turning from particular cases to abstracting broad social and cultural patterns. The first section of the collection presents generally oriented articles anticipating the following sections in which contributions form complimentary sets of more specific contributions that open dialogue with one another – a discussion which can become still more fully realized when engaging the reader. Together, the articles of *Approaching Methodology* allow the discussions of each part of the collection and of the collection as a whole to offer a much richer and more dynamic perspective on methods and methodology than any one article could possibly accomplish alone.

The disciplinary communication barrier is not insurmountable. Cross-disciplinary discussion is enabled by *a*) an awareness of differences in language and frames of reference, and *b*) accommodating for these by negotiating them through the translation of both disciplinary language and disciplinary perspectives. Translation across languages of disciplines demands reframing, re-contextualizing and resituating the methods, concepts and information. This process is not only necessarily done from a perspective, it also produces new perspectives as a process. The outcome of the translation process thereby produces information (Lotman 1990: 11–19), and potentially new knowledge. The knowledge produced by translation is different than any one discipline could forge alone, and can be hypothesized to increase in proportion to the distance between the languages and frames of reference of participants.

The virtual workshop has proven to be a method for opening cross-disciplinary discussion on a broadly international basis, breaking down the thresholds earlier

conditioned by proximity and separation. In addition, it has proven to be a method for generating new perspectives and new knowledge through the very process of negotiating cross-disciplinary communication. Opening cross-disciplinary discussion on method and methodology has therefore been a rich and rewarding enterprise.

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Notes

1. This virtual workshop method is currently also in process in the coordination of two other essay collections. The first of these is the selected proceedings of the multidisciplinary "Viikinkiaika Suomessa – Viking Age in Finland" project. This will produce the collection *Defining and Contextualizing the Viking Age in Finland* (working title), organized and edited by Joonas Ahola (University of Helsinki) and Frog (University of Helsinki). The second is the international multidisciplinary collection *Genre – Text – Interpretation* (working title), organized and edited by Kaarina Koski (University of Helsinki) and Frog (University of Helsinki). On the differences between these different projects and its relationship to the implementation of the virtual workshop method, see note 5, below. These variant applications are presently testing the versatility with which this virtual workshop method can be employed. Perspectives gained from those ongoing virtual workshops also help inform the present description.
2. This was recently highlighted at the Viking Age in Finland multidisciplinary seminars, where "participants from every discipline were dependent on other disciplines in order to successfully frame their research" (Aalto 2011: 41).
3. Richard Macksey employed this quotation in the same capacity nearly half a century ago, when he opened the international symposium "Les Languages Critiques et les Sciences de l'Homme" ['The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man'] (Macksey 1971: 13).
4. This was at the panel discussion "Talking Folklore: A Conversation with Leaders in the Field" at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society, 12th–15th October, Bloomington, Indiana.
5. The implementation of the virtual workshop for the selected proceedings of the multidisciplinary "Viikinkiaika Suomessa – Viking Age in Finland" project (organized and edited by Joonas Ahola and Frog: see note 1, above) involved three significant differences. First, papers were based on seminars with invited participants, and these seminars were themselves methodologically organized to open cross-disciplinary communication and discussion

(see further Ahola & Frog 2011; Aalto 2011). Second, the same essential frame of the workshop and corresponding respondent form and information were provided, but respondents remained anonymous in single-blind peer-review, and working papers were not circulated among participants until respondents had presented their reports. Third, the collection was not intended for the special issue of a journal and therefore was not subject to the same time-constraints. Consequently, this presented the possibility to circulate briefly the revised working papers for final cross-referencing considerations. The international multidisciplinary collection *Genre – Text – Interpretation* (organized and edited by Kaarina Koski and Frog: see note 1, above) developed on the platform of the seminar "Laji nykytutkimuksessa" ['Genre in Current Research'] (organized by Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki, December 2010), with an open international call for papers and additional invited specialists participants. In this case, respondents are organized on the basic virtual workshop model with the essential report form but executed as double-blind peer review. Although Koski had no direct involvement with the virtual workshop of *Approaching Methodology* and Ahola was only engaged in the capacity of an external respondent, comments and discussion with both scholars informed and benefitted the development of the virtual workshop for the present collection.

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Part I: Method in Practice

Method in Practice: An Introduction

The four articles that comprise the opening section of *Approaching Methodology* address different aspects of the interface of method or methodology with questions or goals of research, theory, and objects of research to which methods are applied. Although the role of methods in research tends to be presented as both ideal and objective, realities of their use and valuation develop through broad patterns of social practice in different disciplines (cf. Bourdieu 1977). These processes of social practice, engaging in academic discourses, construct, evolve and communicate the habitus of conscious and unconscious methodologies. The contributions in the opening section, *Method in Practice*, emerge from widely different and complementary perspectives, with both general and specific discussions of challenges and realities of carrying out research within methodological frameworks. These articles simultaneously provide foundational discussions that anticipate the subsequent thematic sections of the collection, as well as providing essential introductions to central themes that weave the contributions to *Approaching Methodology* into a more coherent whole.

However many questions may surround methods, perhaps the most fundamental is the question of which method or methods to use when initiating research. In order for methods to construct the bridge from research questions or goals to outcomes, a method must be commensurate with the material to which it is applied, yet both the material and the method(s) must also be commensurate with the research questions or research goals. At first glance, this may appear to rely on a simple, universal equation. However, relationships between the material, methods and questions or goals are not necessarily one-sided: they frequently enter into dialogue and adapt in the research process. As research produces and constructs data and information,

this may prove incommensurate with the method and research questions: as realities of data become apparent, methods may require adaptation or replacement, or it may become apparent that the actual data is not suited to the initial questions, which themselves must be revised before the particular data can be productively interrogated.

In a discussion that will be of value to any researcher and that provides excellent foundations for the reader of *Approaching Methodology*, Espen Suenson (Åbo Academi) addresses these issues both broadly and efficiently in “Method and Fieldwork in a Hermeneutical Perspective”. This article opens a number of questions fundamental to the collection, such as interfaces and differences between ethnographic research on living cultures and research on pre-history. The contribution outlines a general frame of reference from which later articles in the section build. In addition, it provides a constructive foundation that anticipates the discussions in the second section of the collection, *Constructing Data*. Perhaps most importantly, Suenson (this volume: 26) highlights that “[s]cience is, at its heart, a persuasive activity”. This emphasizes that research is not simply an undertaking by individual researchers who produce descriptions and discussions of their research. The presentation of research is bound to discursive practices that engage other scholars within the frameworks of current methodologies. The success of research is assessed according to those engagements, and without engagements on appropriate terms, arguments will not be accepted, findings or interpretations will not be acknowledged, or the research itself will pass wholly unnoticed.

Almost every study faces the question of the relationship of individual cases or items of data to broader cultural patterns or to a corpus as a whole. Changes in theoretical frameworks of interpretation during the 1960s

and 1970s levelled earlier hierarchies of authority related to the origin and history of individual texts (e.g. Barthes 1967). Every source or example thus became worthy of consideration in a broad range of fields (cf. Leslie, this volume). This was largely owing to an awareness that materials neglected in earlier research practice could be interrogated with different sorts of questions (cf. Suenson, this volume). At the same time, earlier hierarchies of the ‘best’ materials for use in research practice were simultaneously destabilized because, as Jill Bradley (this volume: 34) points out, the ‘best’ informants, artefacts or textual sources “are usually the ones that are in some way exceptional”. The relationship between individual examples and broad cultural phenomena has become a necessary consideration to almost any investigation, yet clear methods for approaching these relationships frequently remain undeveloped and ambiguous.

In “Building a Visual Vocabulary: The Methodology of ‘Reading’ Images in Context”, Jill Bradley (Radboud University, Nijmegen) presents an accessible introduction to a method that she has developed for approaching visual culture – a method which is readily adaptable to diverse modes of expression. Methodologically, her outline of broad perspectives and generalizations as a context for approaching specific cases introduces essential principles discussed in contributions to the third section of this collection, *Culturally Sensitive Reading*. In this article, Bradley concentrates on approaching cultural phenomena in the Middle Ages, opening the theme of retrospective methods, relevant to more than half of the contributions in *Approaching Methodology*. This introduction is valuable in its breadth and scope, from cross-cultural patterns and examples across centuries down to specific cases. Bradley advocates that in areas of study where sources are limited, surveys of materials should attempt to be as extensive as possible (cf. Haukur Þorgeirsson, this volume). Many types of data may intersect in a single study, and as Suenson points out, different types of data may be interrogated with different types of questions. This highlights that the determination of

scope is related to the priorities of an investigation. Individual cases or examples are not only engaged in spatially and temporally localized dialogues; they simultaneously participate in dialogues with patterns of ever-broadening scope. Bradley’s discussion of negotiating generalizations produced by broad surveys of data and the investigation of specific cases is relevant to both historical investigation and current anthropological research.

Methods and methodologies are shaped by social and historical circumstances, yet they are continuously situated and resituated in discourses of the present. At the same time, research in the present frequently relies on research produced in different times and places, and which is consequently bound to methodologies associated with different social, historical and cultural circumstances. As methodologies change, these may become problematic for current use, incompatible with current research questions, or appear more generally obsolete (cf. Fisher, this volume). This is particularly apparent in research that antedates Post-Modernism, and the general shift in paradigms from reconstructing original forms to specific sources and contexts of production; from continuity to variation; from monolithic interpretations to pragmatics and subjective reception. A ‘fact’ of earlier research “is relative in relation to the universum of culture” and changes in a dominant methodology – the frame of reference in relation to which a ‘fact’ is understood – result in the dissolution of various ‘facts’ and their social authority (Lotman 1990: 220). The findings of earlier research and the truth-potential of the methods on which they relied were problematized in these processes. This phenomenon in the history of research is another theme encountered in this collection, addressed in aspects ranging from problems posed by resources produced under earlier methodologies (Goeres, this volume) to adapting earlier methods to new questions in current research (Nordvig, this volume).

In “The Parallax Approach: Situating Traditions in Long-Term Perspective”, Frog (University of Helsinki) addresses precisely these issues. He builds on Bradley’s

discussion of developing general perspectives and working models of traditions and their semiotics, but turns from contextualizing individual cases in a historical 'present' to developing dynamic systemic models (cf. Glukhov & Glukhova, this volume) offering perspectives on historical processes. The adaptation of earlier comparative methods to current methodological contexts results in an outline of a usage-based approach to folklore. This gives attention to the role of social negotiation in historical processes – a role which has often stood beyond the scope of research. Suenson advocated a dialogic negotiation between research questions and their commensurability with data, anticipating discussions in *Constructing Data*; Bradley advocated developing extended perspectives of an extensive corpus and working models for traditions and cultural semiotic resources in anticipation of *Culturally Sensitive Reading*; Frog extends from these discussions to the examination of social patterns in variation within a corpus as an outcome of historical processes, anticipating *Function, Structure and Statistics* as the final section of this collection. This article is a central work on retrospective methods, but it simultaneously offers more general insights into relationships of method, theory and interpretation. The method introduced is concerned with situating traditions in long-term perspective, but the article situates both itself and problems faced in current research within the long-term perspective of the history of disciplinary research.

The discussion of social negotiation in the historical processes of the transmission of traditions provides a springboard to draw the opening section of *Approaching Methodology* full circle, returning to the reality and challenges of social negotiation in research practice, in the education of emerging generations of scholars, and in the interactions between research practice and broader social realities. Language and cultural knowledge are relational and produce boundaries between different social groups, creating cultural centre(s) and cultural margins. Canonical knowledge has historically been maintained by the hegemony of power and has reciprocally reinforces that power and

authority. Precisely this process is challenged by advancing the perspectives of minority groups. (Berger & Luckman 1966; Bourdieu 1977.) Research participates in these processes occurring within and across research disciplines. Dominant methodologies and associated research paradigms condition what research is done in a field and in what ways. Consequently, they condition what research is not done, and thereby areas where knowledge is neither produced nor maintained.

In "The Ghosts of Methodologies Past: Disentangling Method, Methodology and Methodologists in Disciplinary Studies of Marginalized Groups", Sonja Peterson-Lewis (Temple University) offers a valuable discussion on the relationship and distinction of method and methodology. Her discussion opens the theme of relationships between knowledge and power structures with which several articles of the collection connect in different ways (e.g. Goeres, Schrire, this volume). The article is concerned with perspectives of individuals, social groups and cultures that are the objects of investigation, and is one of the many contributions challenging long-dominant perspectives advocated by the hegemony of academic discourse. Decoding cultural trails from the Middle Ages or from contemporary and recent history reveal the practices of everyday reality, offering perspectives on how the surrounding world is reflected through intention and expression, and how it has been made understandable for a community in a particular context. Peterson-Lewis highlights that those perceptions are also shaped historically, and that they reciprocally impact research and emerging generations of researchers for whom ideologies may stigmatize those methods with which they become associated. The intersection of knowledge, popular discourse and organized education are revealed as a nexus of social negotiation and a potentially politically charged arena. These perspectives show that not only is research conditioned by (different) methodologies, but that critical deconstruction is crucial in order to frame current argumentation and justify interpretations within the broader frames and discourses of society in which we participate.

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Method and Fieldwork in a Hermeneutical Perspective

Espen Suenson, Åbo Akademi

The background of the present text is my ongoing work on a doctoral dissertation at Åbo Akademi, a dissertation that is jointly in ethnology and computer engineering. My academic background is similarly partly ethnology and partly computer science. My professional experience as a programmer, along with my interest in ethnology, prompted me to begin an ethnological study of computer programming.

This text is a reflection on the fieldwork I have done to collect data for my dissertation. The fieldwork consists of interviews with and observations of computer programmers collected during the spring and autumn of 2011. I discuss my method along with an example of an ethnological historical study and I put it all in perspective by arguing for a hermeneutical understanding of scientific method.

The purpose of this text is to show how hermeneutics can help in understanding what happens during the scientific process. Hermeneutics is the classical study of what requisites there are to understanding. It has been particularly developed within Bible Studies – biblical exegesis – but has also been applied to other fields such as law and, increasingly since the 19th century, to texts in general. Ethnology is the study of folk culture and as a discipline has always been informed and inspired by other traditions, not least by the hermeneutical tradition and by anthropology.

The hermeneutical influence can be found in the works of ethnological figures such as Troels-Lund and H.F. Feilberg in Denmark, and Helmer Tegnengren in Finland. The anthropological influence in ethnology can be felt especially in the discussions on fieldwork, and is connected with authors such as, for example, Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas

and Clifford Geertz. The discussion of the influence of anthropology on fieldwork will in this text be limited to the work of Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar.

Science as Persuasion

Science is, at its heart, a persuasive activity. Any given research result will at some point be presented either in written form, as a book, article or report, or in oral form, as a talk at a conference or even as a remark during an informal chat between colleagues. The purpose of presenting scientific results is of course to convince the audience of the scientific truth of said result. The ideal of scientific practice is that through free and frank discussion and exchange of arguments between scholars, scientific truth will eventually prevail. The real test of scientific validity lies not in citation count but in the ability to convince educated and informed colleagues of the truth of the matter on the basis of the given scientific evidence. Since argument is the form of all persuasion, this means that scientific activity is a form of argumentative activity. Certainly, a scientific insight may be ever so true, but, if it cannot be presented convincingly, that is, if it cannot be argued, then it will have no impact on science.

We might ask of ourselves now whether argumentation is really an essential part of the scientific process as such. After all, it is possible to imagine that the scientist first reaches his scientific conclusions without giving any thought at all to how they are to be presented and only later constructs the arguments with which to present them. According to this way of thinking, argumentation is added to scientific results almost as an afterthought – as something that is certainly necessary to the spread of scientific knowledge but which is not an

intimate part of how the scientist comes to the knowledge. Argumentation is seen as something external to science. This view, however, is not defensible in light of 20th century philosophical knowledge of argumentation and of science.

Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca published in 1958 their *Traité de l'argumentation* ['Treaties on Argumentation'], which was the result of ten years of intensive studies of argumentation. In their work, they present what is called "the new rhetorics", a modern theory of argumentation that rehabilitates Aristotle's classical thinking on rhetoric and connected it with present day thinking on argumentation. They compare the way a person addresses an audience with the way he considers a matter in the privacy of his own mind:

L'individualisme des auteurs qui accordent une nette prééminence à la façon de conduire nos propres pensées et la considèrent comme seule digne de l'intérêt du philosophe – le discours adressé à autrui n'étant qu'apparence et tromperie – a été pour beaucoup dans le discrédit non seulement de la rhétorique, mais, en général, de toute théorie de l'argumentation. Il nous semble, par contre, qu'il y a tout intérêt à considérer la délibération intime comme une espèce particulière d'argumentation. (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958: §9, p. 54.)

The individualism of those authors who bestow pure pre-eminence on the way we conduct our private thoughts and consider it exclusively worthy of philosophical interest – discourse directed to others is but appearance and guile – has done much to discredit not only rhetorics but in general all theory of argumentation. It appears to us, on the contrary, that it is in every interest to consider private deliberation as a special case of argumentation.

That is to say that to consider a person's deliberation with himself and his private convictions to be the primary object of philosophical and scientific thought, and to consider that arguments directed to an audience are but an afterthought, is both wrong and harmful to the theory of argumentation. Instead, private convictions

are a special case of argumentation in general. This view is clearly at odds with the idea that scientific discovery should be independent of subsequent presentation. Accordingly:

Aussi, de notre point de vue, c'est l'analyse de l'argumentation adressée à autrui qui nous fera comprendre mieux la délibération avec soi-même, et non l'inverse. (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958: §9, p. 54.)

Also, from our point of view, it is the analysis of argumentation directed to others that makes us better comprehend deliberation with oneself, and not the converse.

That is, the analysis of arguments directed to others informs the study of private conviction and not the other way around. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca point out that this way of understanding argumentation allows an explanation of how a person can be convinced of something and yet not be able to express his conviction in a way that can persuade others. This is because the argumentation that suffices to convince himself can be based on arguments that are valid to him alone. But, such arguments, though they may be true and valid as far as the individual is concerned, are not scientific arguments, since they are not held by the general scientific community to be valid. The practice of science requires the uncovering of arguments that are more generally accepted than personal conviction or opinion. We see thus that, in the light of argumentation theory, we cannot completely separate scientific discovery from the way it is to be presented to a scholarly audience.

Such is the judgment of argumentation theory on the matter at hand. We turn now to philosophical thought on the subject. Hans-Georg Gadamer published in 1960 his magnum opus *Wahrheit und Methode* ['Truth and Method'], in which he practically founded the field of philosophical hermeneutics and summed up the preceding centuries' thoughts on the essence of scientific interpretation and scientific understanding. Gadamer points out that understanding is inescapably linked to application. Application is not something that comes after understanding, but is given in advance and determines the whole of

understanding. An interpreter of history seeks to apply his interpretation, and the use of it is not something that comes strictly after a general understanding of the text:

Auch wir hatten uns davon überzeugt, daß die Anwendung nicht ein nachträglicher und gelegentlicher Teil des Verstehensphänomens ist, sondern es von vornherein und im ganzen mitbestimmt. ... Der Interpret, der es mit einer Überlieferung zu tun hat, sucht sich dieselbe zu applizieren. Aber auch hier heißt das nicht, daß der überlieferte Text für ihn als ein Allgemeines gegeben und verstanden und danach erst für besondere Anwendung in Gebrauch genommen würde. (Gadamer 1960: II.II.2.b, p. 307.)

Also, we are therefore convinced that application is not a subsequent and occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding but rather determined from the start and by the whole. ... The interpreter that is working with received tradition seeks himself to apply it. And again, it is not the case that the received text is first understood generally and factually and then only hereafter taken in use for some particular application.

Gadamer gives an example of what this means in the practice of judicial hermeneutics. In judicial hermeneutics, the application of understanding is the action of passing judgment. In order to understand the original intent of a law, the interpreter must understand how the law is used for passing judgment. This means that he must undergo the same process of mental reasoning, of thinking through the consequences of the law, as the judge who is actually passing judgment according to the law. On the other hand, a judge passing judgment in the present situation must understand the intent of the law. That means setting aside the matter at hand for a moment, in order to understand what the original circumstances were in which the law was to be used. Since circumstances always change over time, the letter of the law alone is not enough in passing just judgment. The concept of application of the law is what links the judge of the present with the lawgiver of the past. (Gadamer 1960: II.II.2.c.)

In law, the application of a text is obvious. Regarding history, it seems less immediate. In history, the essential application is to interpret texts and other sources in order to obtain a coherent and meaningful understanding of the past:

Für den Historiker tritt jedoch der einzelne Text mit anderen Quellen und Zeugnissen zur Einheit des Überlieferungsganzen zusammen. Die Einheit dieses Ganzen der Überlieferung ist sein wahrer hermeneutische Gegenstand. (Gadamer 1960: II.II.2.c, p. 322.)

For the historian, the individual text combines with other sources and witnesses to form a united whole of received tradition. The unity of this whole of tradition is his true hermeneutical subject.

That is, for the historian, each single text that he studies joins with other texts and sources and forms a whole that expresses the understanding of our past. The unity of this whole is the true hermeneutical purpose of history.

What is of special interest to us in this is that, accordingly, scientific understanding must be understood in terms of scientific application. For a scholar, the immediate application of research is not the eventual practical usefulness of the results, but rather the necessity of persuading other scholars and, as we understand from the above, oneself. An example of this that should be familiar to many is what we experience when we teach a difficult subject for the first time. Even though we feel that we have mastered the subject ourselves, we find that the fullest understanding comes to us only when we try to teach it to others.

We have argued that, both from a communicative and a philosophical perspective, science is best understood as a persuasive activity. However, though Gadamer's thoughts apply to all understanding in general, he is first and foremost concerned with the phenomenon of understanding within *Geisteswissenschaft*, a term that can be somewhat imprecisely translated as 'the humanities', but one that really means something like 'the sciences concerned with free human thought'.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the persuasive aspect can somehow be avoided in certain fields of science.

The exact sciences are argumentative in exactly the same way as all other sciences. Indeed, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958: §6, p. 37f.) point out that there is no such thing as pure objectivity. This is not to say that objectivity does not exist. Rather, objectivity must always be understood in terms of a subject that regards the object. Without subject there is no object. It is because of this that application has such a central place in Gadamer's explanation of understanding, for it is precisely application that establishes the relationship between subject and object, in that the subject performs some action on the object in order to reach a goal. (Højrup 1995: 65–69.)

In 1979, Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar published the book *Laboratory Life*, an anthropological study of how science is done in a neuroendocrinological laboratory based on two years of observation. Neuroendocrinology as a field is at the very heart of exact sciences and the book has since become a modern classic in the field of science and technology studies. Latour and Woolgar show how science is indeed a highly rhetorical, persuasive activity. Facts and findings are constantly being argued for, questioned and recast in new formulations, with the scientists' credibility and rhetorical skills being important factors in the eventual acceptance or dismissal of their ideas. The rhetorical persuasion is so effective that in the end, the scientists are not even aware that they have been persuaded, but come to regard the accepted arguments as objective, immutable facts. (Latour & Woolgar 1979: 240.) As Latour and Woolgar show conclusively, not even in the exact sciences are the bare facts in themselves enough to make up a scientific finding.¹

The Scientific Argument

As shown above, science is an argumentative activity. In other words, science is persuasion – though not 'mere' persuasion, but a special form of persuasion that is especially convincing. It is therefore of interest to examine what a scientific argument consists

of in more detail. In the classical theory of rhetoric, Aristotle divides the means of demonstration that can be used in an argument into two classes: the non-technical and the technical, where 'technical' is to be understood as rhetorical.² (Aristotle: 1355b, A.II.2.) Non-technical means are here to be understood as the evidence that is given and available to the argument in the form of documents, witness explanations and the like. It is non-technical (not rhetorical) because it is not common to argumentation in general as such, but is particular to the matter being debated. Put another way, when we argue scientifically, we need both something to speak about, which is the scientific evidence, and a way of forming our speech. Scientific evidence is not the same thing as proof. Rather, evidence is the means of proof. A piece of evidence can be interpreted in different ways, yielding different conclusions.

The problem of obtaining the scientific evidence, the data, is the subject of much scientific method. Sometimes the evidence is more or less given, as in an archive of collected material that is just waiting to be analysed. However, in most cases there are some specific questions that we want to answer and our first problem is how to get any evidence at all. At first glance, it would seem that the situations are very different for historical and contemporary research. In historical research, the material available is that which is preserved. We can never hope to get more, short of an unexpected discovery of previously unknown sources. In contemporary research, on the other hand, our informants are still available; the life we are studying is unfurling around us. We can generate as much data as we want to.

A closer examination, however, reveals that this depiction is not entirely accurate. True, the past is the past and in that sense more historical evidence cannot be produced; it is limited to what has been preserved. However, the decision of how much of the preserved evidence should be included in a scientific argument is left to the scholar's discretion.

To take an example: When studying a Danish peasant doing construction works on his fields in the poor moorlands of

Vestjylland in 1834, it is evidently useful to know something about which fields were considered of high quality at that time and in that area. (Gormsen 1982: 13.) Perhaps it would also be relevant to know about the general economic conditions in Vestjylland at the time. Perhaps in all of Denmark. Maybe it would be informative to know about the earlier history of farming techniques, to find out from where the peasant got his knowledge of construction works. The construction works were not particularly successful, so perhaps it would also be useful to have some knowledge of farming techniques in later times in order to interpret the lack of success – not to speak of comparing similar construction works in the area at the time. Also, the construction works were just a small aspect of the peasant's activities.

As we see, the limited availability of historical evidence is only apparent, since much more historical evidence has been preserved than a single person can possibly process in its entirety. The real limit on the availability of evidence is that the evidence does not always speak about the things that we want to know about. The peasant's diary speaks mostly of farming tasks, of construction works and money loans, when what we are really interested in is the farmer's perception of his existence, a classic ethnological subject. Any historical research involves a selection of the relevant historical evidence. This selection is a limitation that the historian imposes on herself in order to be able to make an interpretation; see for example Jill Bradley's discussion of how to select material for image research in this volume of *RMN Newsletter*. Thus, the fundamental limits on the availability of historical evidence is in essence a problem of interpretation rather than quantity.

Let us now examine the case of contemporary research. My current research involves conducting interviews by phone with engineers in other countries, transcribing those interviews and finally analysing what the engineers tell me. It is often quite difficult to make out what the engineers say over a bad phone connection and in a language that is foreign to both of us. Even if I can understand what they are saying, it does not always make

sense to me. Of course, since the research is contemporary, I can always collect more evidence, either by talking to the engineers again or by finding some other engineers to ask. There is, though, a limit to how much evidence I can process – I cannot talk to every single engineer in the world. And even if I could, the problems of understanding the engineers are still there. If there is something I do not understand, I can ask the engineers again, but it is perfectly possible that I will still not understand the answer.

The essential problem of the availability of contemporary scientific evidence is, as in the case of historical research, one of interpretation. This is, of course, assuming that the people I am studying want to let me interview them in the first place. People have their reasons for wanting to talk to me or not, and that is a factor outside my control. The access to the field of study is a fundamental limitation in contemporary research. This is akin to historical research in that, for some reason or other, the people of the past chose to write some things down and not others, as in the diary mentioned above where the peasant chose to write about his work, not his emotions. That cannot be changed. This limitation evidently does not preclude contemporary studies of a field that is difficult to access or historical studies of a sparsely documented subject, but the available evidence will be more indirect and the task of interpretation accordingly more difficult.

This discussion of the availability of evidence reveals that it is of crucial importance when talking about scientific method to know what it is that we want to know something about – the research goal. We mentioned that the scientific argument has to have something to speak about and a way of saying it, and a final requirement is of course that there is something we want to say. This something, which is the research goal, is determining for the interpretation of evidence, and this is the reason that Gadamer devotes so much effort to the relationship between interpretation and application in *Wahrheit und Methode*. Gadamer puts it this way:

Der Historiker verhält sich zu seinen Texten wie der Untersuchungsrichter beim Verhör von Zeugen. Indessen macht die bloße

Feststellung von Tatsachen, die er etwa der Voreingenommenheit der Zeugen ablistet, noch nicht wirklich den Historiker, sondern erst das Verständnis der Bedeutung, die er in seinen Feststellungen findet. (Gadamer 1960: II.II.2.c, p. 321.)

The historian's relationship to his texts is like that of the examining magistrate's relationship to the interrogation of a witness. Meanwhile, the mere establishment of facts stripped of the bias of the witness is not enough to make a historian, save for the understanding of meaning that he finds during this establishment.

That is, the historian's relationship to the historical document is like that of a judge to a witness being interrogated. The raw facts in themselves, stripped of the bias of the witness, are not interesting but for the understanding of meaning that the historian finds during the discovery of facts.

Examples of Method in Fieldwork

As argued above, availability of evidence and research goals are factors that are important in forming scientific method. I will now give some examples from my ongoing research of how scientific method is influenced by these factors and how it in turn influences them.

My research is concerned with the work practices of computer programmers. The goal is to present a characterization of programming work based on my observations and on an ethnological perspective on culture, and to compare this characterization with the programmers' own understanding of their work practice. The focus on work practice and its connection to cultural context makes my research comparable to studies such as *Arbetets flytande gränser* by Billy Ehn from 1981, in which Ehn presents the results of the seven months he spent as a factory worker in the medical industry. Gudrun Gormsen's 1982 study of the diary of a moorland peasant in the years 1829–1857 is also an inspiration for my research, since Gormsen's work can be perceived as a historical work study.

The data I have collected for my research falls in two parts. The first part consists of interviews conducted by telephone with software engineers from about twenty companies from all over Europe. The

companies all work with safety-critical systems, that is, they make automobiles, airplanes, medical equipment and so forth. The second part consists of notes from four weeks I spent as an observer in a small company that makes computer games. I was present during work hours: ordinary office hours, usually nine to five. The time was spent predominantly in observation and taking notes, without interacting with the people concerned. This is supplemented by interviews with the employees and a collection of some photographs and written material.

The collection of the first part of the data is a prime example of how the availability of evidence can influence method. I was offered, as part of another research project, to participate in making the interview series. The interviews were to be focused on how software engineers describe their work, as that was the focus of the other research project. My original intent was to perform observations on site in companies. However, it is time consuming to find informants who are willing to be studied. Moreover, from my contacts in academia, I knew that it could be difficult to get access to companies in this particular branch of the software industry because they are sometimes secretive about their detailed operations. Thus, when it became possible to gain access to informants from all these companies with whom it might otherwise have been difficult to establish contact, I chose to collect data with the prescribed method of the other research project – telephone interviews – instead of my original preference, observation on site.

This, on the other hand, also offers an example of how method can influence research goals. The telephone interview method and the focus on the informants' descriptions of their work practices was not as well suited as the observation method for my prime research interest at the time, the concrete day to day work practice. With the telephone interview material, I have to infer the work practices from the conversations with the engineers instead of observing it directly. This could be seen as a deviation from my original intent; however, I realized that the material offers other possibilities.

Specifically, the telephone interview material shows in a much more direct way than observations of practice how the programmers describe their work and thus how they understand their work. The programmers' understanding of their work and the relation it has to their work practice thus became a much more important aspect of my research goals than previously. This also goes to illustrate the point of the preceding section, that availability of evidence is more a question of interpretation than of quantity.

The influence of research goals on method is in many cases immediately obvious: a method is chosen for its ability to generate evidence that can reveal something about that which we want to investigate. This influence also applies to the collection of the second part of my data. To observe work practice as directly as possible, I chose to use immediate, direct observation. This choice may perhaps seem obvious, but it is not the only option available. I could have chosen to rely exclusively on interviews, to do a pure academic literature study or to collect written evidence from the internet. All of these methods have their merit. However, as I seek to investigate programming not only as it is understood but also as it is concretely practiced, I chose the method that has the most immediate connection to concrete practice, namely to be present during the work. Or rather, there exists an even more immediate method – which is to actually do the work, as Ehn did in his factory study. I decided not to do the latter, partly because it would take longer than I was prepared to spend on the study and partly because I already have years of practice as a programmer and thus judge myself capable of understanding the practice that I observe without carrying out the practice myself.

The influence of method on the availability of evidence is also exemplified by the second part of my data collection. Choosing on-site observations as my method limited the availability of companies to study. Having an observer present affects the workplace and this can be seen as an unnecessary burden on the company. I was thus turned down by one company on this ground. Even within the observation situation, the choice of method

can be felt. Because I was more interested in the programmers' interaction with each other than with me, I sought to minimize my interaction with them. This meant that explanatory comments and casual remarks directed to me, evidence in their own right, became much scarcer. The relative availability of two kinds of evidence that to a degree exclude each other was affected by my choice of method.

The Role of Scientific Theory

Let us now take a look at how we can understand the role of scientific theory in the scientific argument. At a very general level, a theory explains what is relevant about the subject matter and how the relevant parts relate to each other. It is a point of departure for our understanding. Thus, theory ideally tells us how we expect things to be before we start an investigation into the matter.

The question of prerequisites to understanding is treated in depth by Gadamer. What he arrives at is that there can be no understanding without prejudice (*Vorurteil*). (Gadamer 1960: II.II.1.a.α.) Prejudices are perspectives and opinions, and we all always hold some prejudices. No mind is a blank slate. Without prejudice we cannot even begin to comprehend. For example, if I try to read a Greek play without knowing Classical Greek, the text will just appear to me as incomprehensible scribbles. A first prerequisite is to have a basic understanding of facts, e.g. to know the letters and the words. This basic understanding (*Vorverständnis*) is a part of prejudice. (Gadamer 1960: II.II.1.c, p. 278.) When this is present, the actual process of understanding can begin. Here prejudice is crucial. Prior to reading the text, I will have formed an idea, accurate or not, of whether the author is to be trusted to tell the truth or whether he for some reason lies. If I read Aristophanes' plays as a literal description of ancient Greek society, my understanding will falter. To make sense of the plays, I need to have the proper prejudicial view that they do not literally tell the truth – that they exaggerate and distort it in order to amuse, and to criticize society. The task of hermeneutics is to distinguish between

true and false prejudice. (Gadamer 1960: II.II.1.c, p. 282f.)

We can thus understand scientific theory as a part of our prejudices in the sense of Gadamer. We always have prejudices, whether we acknowledge them or not. Scientific theory is a form of prejudice that we are conscious of, have made explicit and have written down. What makes it prejudice – as opposed to simply judgment – is that we take the theory as a starting point whenever we encounter new evidence. Exactly because this explicit prejudice is not unconscious and taken for granted, we are able to have a scientific discussion about it. We need to keep in mind, though, that understanding is a continuous process. (Gadamer 1960: II.II.1.d.) In good scientific practice, theory is constantly confronted with evidence and revised. As understanding deepens, theory changes.

Science as Dialogue

Choosing good metaphors is an essential part of science. A metaphor for scientific understanding itself is that it is a dialogue with the evidence, the field. The scientist poses a question by looking at the evidence in a certain way. The ‘answer’ is the new understanding that the scientist gains, in turn leading to more questions, and more answers. The process of understanding is described in this way as an ongoing dialogue between scientist and evidence.

Is this metaphor justified? Gadamer himself points out that questions play a central role in understanding (Gadamer 1960: II.II.1.c, p. 283) and the entire last third of *Wahrheit und Methode* is devoted to examining the relationship between language and understanding. As we have seen earlier in this article, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca consider private deliberation to be a special case of argumentation, which means that it can also be considered a special kind of dialogue.

As McCloskey writes in a treatise on the scientific rhetoric of the field of economics, science is not a privileged way of knowing, it is a way of speaking about things (McCloskey 1985: ch. 4, p. 67). This fits well with our characterization of science as a persuasive

activity and as dialogue. We can then ask what characterizes scientific speech, what is the prototypical form of scientific argument. Here we can find a model in the classic rhetorical concept of *epicheireme*. Ordinarily, an argument³ does not state fully and completely all of its premises; something is left out and meant to be tacitly understood. The *epicheireme* is the fully elaborated argument where the major premises, minor premises and conclusion are stated in their entirety. (Kennedy 1984: ch. 1, p. 17.) This, then, is the ideal model for the scientific argument where everything is laid bare for other scholars to examine. Of course, in practice, most scientific writing is not composed of *epicheiremes* and most scientific investigations are not even *epicheiremes* in themselves; instead, they build upon each other. As an ideal though, the *epicheireme* is the rhetorical concept that best characterizes science.

If we view scientific understanding as a dialogue with the field, then method becomes the way of engaging in the dialogue, of posing questions and listening to answers. Good method, then, is to let the dialogue guide the method in such a way that we always engage in the dialogue in the most fruitful manner. Bad method is to choose once and for all to fix a method and let it impose arbitrary and unwarranted restrictions on the dialogue with no regard to how the said dialogue is evolving. In other words, both the subject of scientific research and the increasing scientific understanding need to be both the determinant for and to be above method.

Wie man sieht, ist das Problem der Methode ganz von dem Gegenstand bestimmt...
(Gadamer 1960: II.II.2.b, p. 297.)

What is seen is that the problem of method is wholly determined by the subject...

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Notes

1. Compare with the quotation from Gadamer in the end of the next section.
2. Since Aristotle considers rhetorics to be a technique, *τέχνη*, which means something like an art or a craft

– something that can be taught. (Aristotle: 1354a, A.I.2.)

3. In rhetorical terminology: enthymeme.

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[†] With an English summary.

Building a Visual Vocabulary: The Methodology of ‘Reading’ Images in Context

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In attempting to understand attitudes and ideas of the past, obviously the best method is to consult the people of the time, and many historians have given us pictures of societies as seen through the eyes of various individuals, or of events and persons that they feel reveal attitudes and ideas (see e.g. Brann 2002); this is a valuable tool, but here the broader view is considered – that which was seen and understood by a society or groups in a society.

Images are more than simply representations: they are the conveyers of ideas. They have their own vocabulary and validity, frequently complementary to written texts, but independent of them. Nor is the vocabulary static or absolute, but rather varies with the society and changes through time (see Frog, this volume, for context and tradition). Just like words, images are used to broadcast a message and must take into account the visual vocabulary of the intended audience. At first sight, the images of another culture are usually incomprehensible: we may appreciate them aesthetically or interpret them according to the norms of our own society, but this is to misread their message and ignore their intended function (see Frog 2011b; Bradley 2011a). Nevertheless, our present society is influenced by others, past and present, and images not only adapt to their

context, but they also help shape that context and influence traditions (see Bradley 2011b).

Images are metaphors and these can be altered or lose their original meaning due to changes in context and mind-set or way of thinking, as well as in the preoccupations of society (see Osborne, this volume). This paper offers a *method of building* a vocabulary of visual metaphors, not as an absolute, but as an acknowledgement of the pressures of context (time and location, in both the narrow and broader sense) and thereby an opportunity to deepen the understanding of both the image and the context. Such a visual vocabulary is an attempt to do justice to the ideas, attitudes and preoccupations of the society that produced the work. In a sense, it is reconstructing a lost language or learning a new one. Examples will come chiefly from the medieval period in north-western Europe, but the method is applicable to a broad range of cultures and periods, including modern works.

Images as Sources

Visual sources are still regarded as suspect by some, chiefly because of the element of interpretation. Some historians have warned that it is dangerous to take representations as factual reports of the life of the time, or of the event depicted, since paintings, sculpture and

other such objects frequently had a high symbolic content. In fact, it is just this symbolic content that is one of the most valuable aspects of visual sources, especially when we try to understand the thought and mentality of a period. There are several reasons for this: the first of these is that depictions (of the medieval period) almost always give the prevalent view, at least of the group among which they circulated.¹ Written sources, especially those of an educated elite, can give a limited or personal viewpoint, or they can deal with matters that were felt unsuitable for or not the concern of the more general public. Even miniatures, which served a minority, give a broader view of current ideas than the tracts and exegesis of a small group of theologians. Of course, some idea of the acceptance and popularity of written sources can be deduced from contemporary library catalogues and the number of times works are cited or mentioned. However, there is less indication of whether such ideas circulated among the average Christian worshipper. Illuminations were seen by the literate but not necessarily very learned, while the paintings and statues in churches – or at least a considerable number of these – were seen by the public at large. It may be argued that such ‘public’ works represent what the Church, or other patron, wanted to be seen – and believed – rather than the views of the general populace, but such things are also some of the few sources for popular piety and belief. A great deal can be learned about popular belief and custom from such things as votive images, pilgrims’ badges, and other religious souvenirs, often derived from ‘primary’ images,² and these indicate the degree of acceptance of what the Church taught.³ While it is true that much has been suppressed or lost, we can get an idea of belief and attitudes, popular and elite, from a careful and close examination the various visual sources available to us.

In Search of a Method

All too often, images have been used to illustrate a point, confirming other sources, or even been used inaccurately, out of context, as decoration, or at best as a confirmation of more traditional written sources. Today,

visual sources are becoming more acceptable and more often used by a wide range of historians, often as a subsidiary source, but nevertheless as sources in their own right. However, the use of visual sources demands a careful and rigorous methodology. If we are to treat images as sources in their own right, then they must be subject to the same academic standards as anything else, but the means by which to achieve this have been uncertain. The pre-eminence of documents, chronicles, charters, letters and such, has left historians with no real tradition of methodology when it comes to images. Art historians have usually concentrated on style and aesthetics, although now there is a much broader approach followed by many, including material research, patrons and, of particular interest in this case, iconology. Groundbreaking work was done by such pioneers as Panofsky, Warburg, and Mâle.⁴ In his introduction to *Studies in Iconography*, Panofsky (1962) defined iconography as dealing not with form, but with subject and meaning, thereby bringing images closer to the history of ideas and mentalities. Although Panofsky saw the importance of context, iconology has concentrated on using texts to understand images: images could refer to one or several texts. Panofsky devoted a considerable amount of his best-known work *Studies in Iconography* to the transmission of classical texts and how these were known and interpreted visually. This is still holding written texts as a sort of ultimate authority; for images to be seen as sources in their own right, sources that can confirm, complement or even contradict other sources, different methods are needed, and these methods must be clear, rigorous and functional in order to combat accusations of selection bias, lack of relevance, subjectivity, and idiosyncratic interpretation.

Selection of Material

The first challenge is adapting a research question to a visual formula – in other words, how can the subject of investigation have been expressed visually? This is similar to finding metaphors in other fields, a question of what that society regarded as analogous to the idea they were trying to express (see

Osborne and Glukhov & Glukhova, this volume). This search must be viewed from a diversity of angles, some less obvious than others. If we consider medieval images and ideas, kingship, for example, can be found not only in ruler portraits but also in images of biblical stories such as those about David, Saul, Solomon, and in miniatures in Romances, such as those of Chrétien de Troyes, or in histories. It is a question of seeing how such figures serve as a metaphor or parallel for an idea or ideal. Changes in ideas can best be studied over a long period and the spread of ideas in a defined area, or by comparing defined areas and the contacts between them. However this choice is not completely free: it can happen that there is little or no visual evidence in a particular period, area or medium, thus requiring a reassessment of the situation, and possibly adjustment of the research questions. The research context can change or modify both the research question and the approach to it (see Suenson, this volume). Lack of material could mean that the topic was not considered of interest, or if confined to élite media, considered dangerous for the general public – or that the senders had nothing to gain by broadcasting a message in that form, which in itself is revealing.⁶ In many ways the people of the time dictate the choice of corpus.

Material should be gathered to get as broad a view as possible in order to understand what people meant by a particular concept or idea: the avoidance of selection bias demands all you can find, rather than only the familiar, beautiful, or exceptional. Only by working out what was known and accepted can any general idea be formed. Using statistics of spread and frequency on which to base general conclusions makes it possible to find common elements in an almost exhaustive corpus (Glukhov & Glukhova, this volume; Frog 2011a). Almost certainly there will be something overlooked, but an honest attempt to track down and take into account everything possible should give relatively reliable results. As with most fields dealt with in this volume, research is not done under controlled laboratory conditions, but deals rather with the products of the human mind and society, and in many cases the vagaries of

time, of people and of institutions, both past and present. It can happen, even quite late in research, that one or two newly-found examples must be taken into account, sometimes requiring a revision of preliminary findings. Internet resources are a boon, but examining original images in situ should be done as much as possible, for only then can the researcher see more or less what the original recipients saw, not photographs enhanced by zoom, flash and all the benefits of modern photography (see Bradley 2008: 553–564).⁷ Another important point is that photographs, especially older ones, can give the wrong impression; what can seem a telling detail could be a shadow, a chip or crack, or as I found out – fortunately before publication – a fault in the parchment.

Relevance

A more difficult question is the relevance of the sources. The earlier the period, the less the chance that something was depicted or the depiction has survived, and later depictions reflect the ideas of the times in which they were made. Indeed, images are a good way to chart how ideas and attitudes vary from place to place and from period to period, especially if they deal with a basic subject, such as biblical narratives. Each society has its own preoccupations and uses standard subjects as metaphors for their concerns and messages. Moreover, each society has its own style, its own way of seeing, and this affects our use of images in several respects. Images are vulnerable to destruction and damage either intentional, unintentional or through natural decay; they can also be altered to fit the way of seeing of other generations, making them ‘fitting’ for the ideas of that time. Many people are shocked by the restored polychrome of churches because the vividly colored interiors and exteriors clash with the present-day mental image of a calm, sober place, and even Gothic exuberance restrained by gray or cream-colored stone. People can find early medieval images shocking, humorous, irreverent or ugly, so it is a question of putting aside (present-day) aesthetics and attitudes and regarding an image in the context of its time in order to assess its proper message. In a number of

important cases, we can draw on earlier copies of works that have been destroyed, lost or greatly altered, such as those made by various 19th century scholars of *Hortus Deliciarum* (Green 1979) or Grimaldi's drawings of the frescos of Old St. Peter's and John VII's Oratory in Rome, destroyed in the 17th century. These works are invaluable, but it must be remembered that they were seen through the visual conventions of the time: this does not mean that the copies *qua* content are not valid, but some of the more subtle points, perhaps a softening of features, cannot be attributed to the original.⁸

Description, Analysis, and Basic Type

If aiming at a snapshot of a particular period or place, then analyzing the geographical and chronological spread of the corpus is not necessary, but, when considering larger areas and longer periods, revealing information can emerge from such an analysis. Changes in metaphor and treatment can indicate a change of ideas or attitude, while the persistence of a type of image or metaphor can reveal that a particular basic attitude has remained unchanged. For example, the well-known skeleton or transi as a personification of death emerged around the first quarter of the 15th century and has remained stable up to today, while older versions – giants, demons, dragons, and a woman – have been lost or absorbed into other meanings and metaphors. Often a particular subject can be found in clusters, both in regard to time and place, indicating that the subject for which the scene is a metaphor was more important at particular times and places than others. The same is true of iconographic elements: such analyses reveal how each period or area handled the subject, which elements were emphasized, and thereby general shifts in attitude. This is analogous to the careful and detailed reading discussed by Pauliina Latvala and Kirsi Laurén (this volume): how a subject is handled is as revealing as what is handled in uncovering why it was important and its relevance for that particular society. Comparing the frequency with that of other subjects can also deliver insights. When assessing frequency within the corpus it is important that this is relative frequency. The

later the period, the more images of a particular subject are likely to be found simply because of survival rates. In absolute terms, a subject can appear in more images in the 12th century, but its relative frequency might be less than in the 11th century.

A detailed description of each image – although sometimes wearying – means that the frequency of iconographic elements can be noted and, from this, the 'standard' elements become apparent, and the less common or even unique ones can be seen for the exceptions they are.¹⁰ This knowledge of the standard iconographic elements and the relationship between them enables the construction of a 'basic type'. It is important to realize that this is an abstraction – in fact it is rare to find a real image that conforms exactly to a basic type – a mental construct of the elements most commonly found in the corpus, or part thereof (see Frog on the parallax as an abstract concept, this volume). It is an image that the majority of a society would recognize and regard as an adequate depiction of the subject/metaphor. This basic type serves three main purposes. First, it gives an indication of the generally accepted view; second, it makes what can be a very large corpus manageable; and third, it is also an instrument of measurement against which individual works can be compared.

The first function gives a real basis for saying that this is how the people of the period – or the section of the population under investigation – thought about the subject and expressed their thoughts visually. The popularity of a subject, iconographic feature, or manner of handling indicate the extent to which the ideas expressed were current, and how they were taken over time or area can reveal differences in context (see Glukhov & Glukhova, this volume).¹¹ In literature and exhibitions we tend to see the same works time and again – and these are usually the ones that are in some way exceptional, particularly fine or beautiful, different in treatment or content to other works, unusual in choice of subject or approach, or they might have an illustrious or fascinating history – or they might just have drawn the attention of a scholar who published widely on them. However, they cannot be regarded as

typical, and must be seen against a background of other works; indeed, their very differences mean that we cannot rely solely on them for an indication of generally held attitudes.

The second function is a very practical one. In many cases the corpus of works can be very large and even if there are time and facilities for a very detailed analysis of each work and its context, there remains the problem of finding a way through the mass of information and trying to draw conclusions from it. Establishing a basic type or types gives a simplified picture in which the common details are clear. In comparing a series of basic types, either over time or across regions, differences, changes and similarities become apparent: features that could be obscured by such things as style, coloration and decoration, are more easily compared when brought back to their basic constituents.

It could be said that such an approach does not do justice to individual works, but here the third function comes into play. By measuring individual works against the basic type we can see what makes them different; their individuality and uniqueness is highlighted, we can see if they hark back to a previous tradition, or stand at the start of another. Moreover, we can ask why a work deviates from the norm, what circumstances gave rise to its particular idiosyncrasies, and in so doing add to our knowledge of factors that can influence and change ideas. It can also prevent us making unwarrantable assumptions and gives justification for the selection of images for more detailed study.

Interpretation

This brings us to the thorny problem of interpretation - not only the primary level of identifying the metaphor, but how this is handled and what can be said of that way of dealing with a subject. By reducing the variations of all the individual works and incorporating the 'standard' iconographic elements, it is possible to try to interpret this general view.

It is obvious that present-day standards or value judgments cannot apply – a new-born infant lying on a small white cloth on the cold

ground while the mother and other adults look on cannot be seen as a case of child abuse or neglect. Nor can depictions of Mary reading while Joseph makes porridge or dries a diaper be seen in terms of women's emancipation or male parenting skills. Used as a source for discovering how people of a certain time thought, the frame of reference must be the one of that time, and when using later drawings or reconstructions, it should be borne in mind that these are seen through double lens spectacles – those of the 'copy' society and those of our own – and that allowances need to be made.

In most cases, images are not intended to be 'factual' representations of events but the events are used to serve the concerns of the society in which the images are made. The way in which a subject is handled reflects attitudes and ideas, but it must be remembered that these attitudes and ideas are influenced by tradition, including visual tradition. Images must be regarded as "having a life of their own which does not have to be based on the actual world" (Hourihane 2003: 5). These traditions can influence not only the way in which we visualize something, but how we think about it. This is particularly true when dealing with conflated scenes because the modern tendency is to see an image as a single scene. An example of this are the temptations of Adam and Eve, which were given as two separate events in the biblical texts and are depicted thus in many early and Byzantine images; but, due to the pictorial tradition of conflating the scenes, the majority of western societies think of Eve on one side of Tree of Knowledge offering an apple (itself quite a late innovation) to Adam on the other, with the serpent wound round the tree with another apple in its mouth. This sort of conflation was often due to constraints of space, trying to give a full pictorial narrative in a single historiated initial or on the side of a sculpted capital, but then frequently developed into an iconographic tradition.¹²

The medium can also affect how a scene is depicted and it is at this point that the basic type can reveal whether something that in an individual image can be surprising is in fact 'standard' for the period. Some depictions can seem startling – a case in point is reliefs of the

Fall of Man in which Adam grips his throat “as if the forbidden fruit had become stuck” (Stoddard 1981). By comparing the one relief with others from the same area and period it is clear this is a standard gesture. Moreover, the contexts of many of these works show that it is more likely to denote doubt and hesitation rather than the result of eating the forbidden fruit, a notion strengthened by the miniatures of the time in which Adam frequently holds his hand in front of his face as a standard gesture of recoil – something much more difficult to execute in relief than in paint. Thus by placing an image within a broader context of similar images, by being aware of how something is dealt with in other media, it is possible to reduce the level of uncertainty and subjectivity in interpretation.

The Larger Context

At this point, it is necessary to look at a much larger context, that of the world in which the images were made. What were the circumstances that gave rise to the recognition of the basic type embodiment of various ideas and attitudes? Other primary sources can be a means of checking and rechecking an interpretation, of modifying or even completely revising it. Of course, this demands an interdisciplinary approach, and the choice of these primary sources is dictated by the research question and need not be confined to written texts: buildings, material objects, textiles and such like can often shed light on both subject and image. In many cases these sources, particularly written texts, can clarify something that is puzzling about elements of the basic image, but the image can also prompt new understandings of the text. Combined, the background circumstances, texts known to be used, and the basic image can give a general idea of a society’s attitude to issues and, to a certain extent, even of which factors shape particular views. Obviously, the areas to be considered both for context and texts or other sources cannot include everything, but they should include the circumstances that could have influence on the medium, its production, and the subject – that is to say those relating to patrons, makers and other interested parties. They should also include the moral and

intellectual climate. In periods like the Middle Ages that saw symbolism in almost everything, following a train of thought that leads to a metaphor can help lead to an understanding of both textual and visual sources, and the more familiar the researcher is with this process, the more easily both can be read and the chances of false interpretation due to a present-day cast of mind are reduced. Such sources might conflict, but such conflict lends itself to greater insight into a question. It is also of importance to realize that images are powerful, not only in their own time, but color the present-day view; for example what we know of the disagreements and wars between the sons of Louis the Pious is colored by the picture presented in both words and images by Charles the Bald and his partisans. Pragmatism means that the all available sources must be considered, but both text and image have elements of propaganda.

If considering a longitudinal study or one with a geographical spread, it is sometimes noticeable that a particular subject becomes more popular in certain circumstances such as political unrest, bad harvests, changing relationships between parts of society or between Church and state. If this is the case, then it helps our insight into how people thought, how they chose their metaphors and expressed their concerns: in other words, their choice of metaphor and how that is handled reflects a way of seeing their world. The interaction between world and expression, between context and image, illuminates both. The image helps to see the point of view of the makers, and without the context, the image loses most of its meaning. Here, secondary sources can be of great use, since they can indicate areas and even images that have not been considered in the preliminary analysis. They can also be a touchstone for any preliminary conclusions. Other scholars have different viewpoints, have considered other aspects that could be relevant, and have areas of expertise that can be used to deepen understanding and to check findings.

Individual Works

The basic type gives a general view and also shows what is different in individual works. This makes the choice of individual works to

be examined – case histories – less subjective. This detailed examination can be regarded as a form of ‘close reading’ (see Latvala & Laurén, this volume) to infer attitudes and emotions – things that can be expressed in the smallest elements, the tilt of a head, direction of a gaze, or the way an object is depicted.¹³ Images can be chosen because they come close to the basic type and allow a more detailed analysis of both specific work and context or because of their deviance from the standard highlights different or exceptional circumstances. In addition to a deeper pictorial analysis, in order to reduce the subjectivity still further, it is important not to look at an image in isolation but within its iconographic context. This also guards against over-hasty assumptions of the identification of a particular metaphor. One of the drawbacks of working from the often excellent images to be found in books and on the internet is that so often the image is seen as independent, and most images were meant to be ‘read’ in context.¹⁴ Fortunately, now many library websites allow consultation of all pages, or at least all images, in a manuscript, while many sites give ‘virtual tours’ of churches etc. These tours are far from ideal, but do give a better sense of the whole message, rather than just a ‘word’ or ‘sentence’ found in single images or details. In fact, ‘reading’ an image demands that attention is paid to the whole rather than to just a small part. This is where it is important to see as much in situ as possible, and try to see it as an entity rather than as an individual image.

Images often complement and reinforce each other, adding new layers of meaning. A ruler’s portrait gains in dimension if the ruler’s stance and features are echoed in a picture of Solomon, for instance. Moreover, seeing an image in the context of the entire work is to see its role in the whole program and therefore how it relates to the message as a whole. The meaning of words can be altered or even destroyed if taken out of context, and this applies to images too. By being read in context the message becomes apparent, and not just the building blocks: the forest is revealed, not just the individual tree. There is always a tendency to view each image in

isolation because our present-day way of seeing is based less on images as texts and more as illustration or decoration. Medieval images were made to inform and persuade, to stimulate meditation, devotion and memory, to make the abstract concrete and give validity and veracity. They “were the pivot around which revolved a series of activities” (Marks 2004) that were central to the life of both communities and individuals. Finding the relationship between the idea and the visualization demands that images be seen in context, and this applies to individual works as well as the basic type. The same steps apply in examining the specific context as the more general context – primary and secondary sources being used to gain as full a picture as possible. In the case of specific works, these are obviously more detailed and can often involve trying to find the meaning of puzzling details, as well as the role of specific patrons, geographical, social and political position, and the intellectual and moral climate.

Unfortunately, medieval writers rarely described sculpture, paintings and such. However, we occasionally have accounts of what the designers wanted to achieve, such as Suger de Saint-Denis’s (ca. 1081–1151) *De administratione* (Panofsky 1946). In other cases, a writer might have expressed the ideas without actually referring to a building or any material object, but can throw light on how these might have been translated into visual terms. The reverse is also true: the visual metaphors can help understand texts – after all, people often think visually (Ryle 1990 [1949]: 232–263). Even if no such direct indications can be found, primary (written) sources can give the flavor of the context, letting us see what part ambition, prosperity, uncertainty, or change of leadership or allegiance played in the life of the communities that made and used the works.

Conclusion

Churches and liturgical objects were a focal point in any medieval Christian community, whether enclosed, urban, courtly, rural, learned, or illiterate, and what people saw was linked to this central factor of their lives. In many cases the church was the only place in

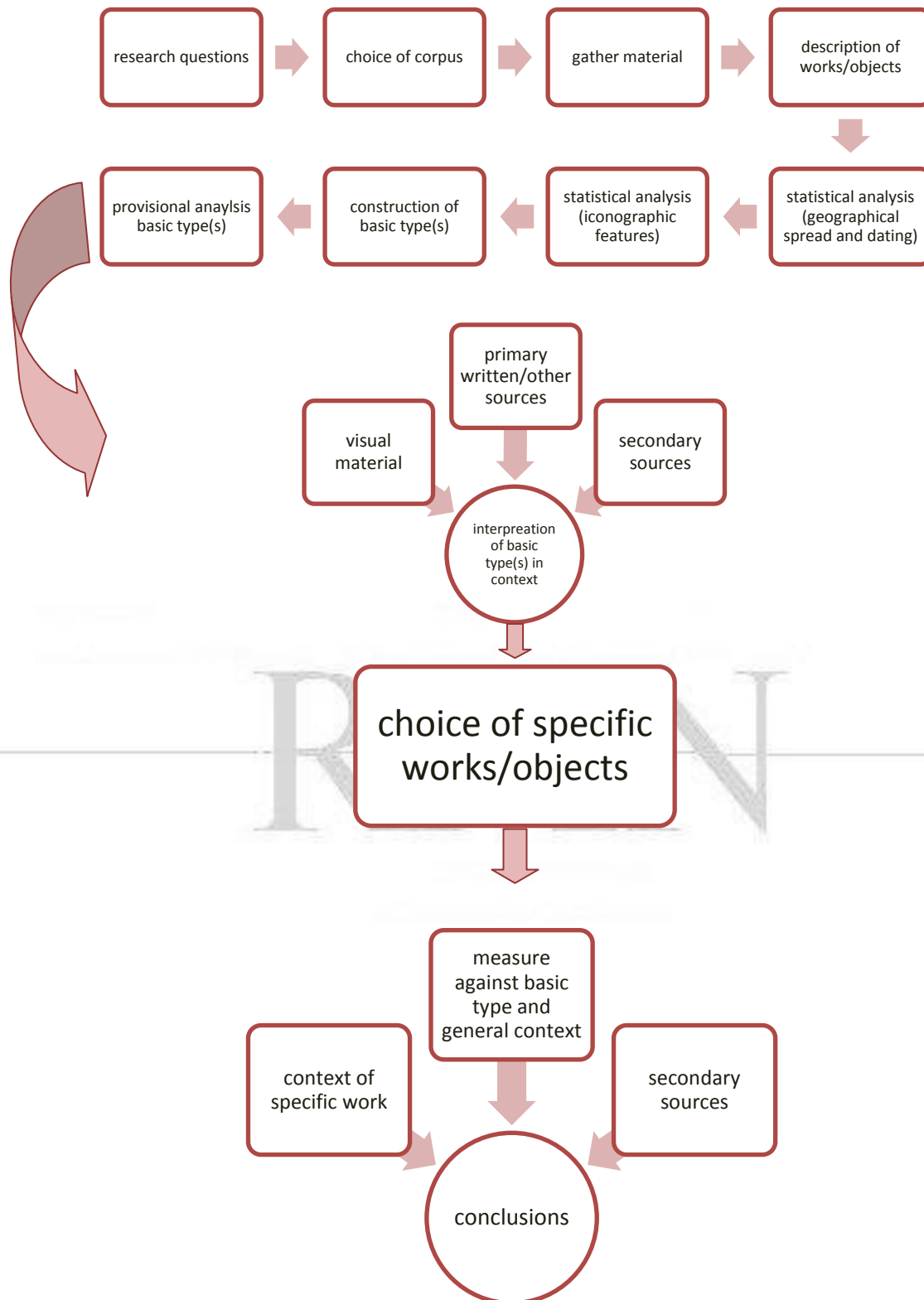


Figure 1. The use of visual sources – schematic representation of method of work using basic types (© Jill Bradley 2009).

which people saw light, color and form used to make representations, the only place in which words, music and ritual combined with the visual for a sensual experience aimed at the anagogic experience. Beauty, richness,

mystery all lifted people from their everyday world, made abstract ideas of heaven and salvation real and concrete – and the horrors of hell more threatening. Images can help us understand how they saw heaven and hell, the

relationship between man and God, between man and lord, between men and women, man and nature, adults and children. They can show us modes of thought, views of right and wrong, of love and intolerance, how they saw the past and what they hoped or feared for the future – indeed anything that concerns the human condition.¹⁵

Having an overview makes it possible to see how the individual works fit into this context, to see both the general and the specific in relation to each other. To achieve this still requires moving between context and work, context and basic type, checking and adjusting. It is against this background that links and patterns can be discerned that enable the formation of a solidly based and yet differentiated interpretative theory of the subject (see the schematic diagram in Figure 1).

Notes

1. Even today, illustrated books are considerably more expensive than text-only books. In the medieval period, the cost of making images meant that it was the established authorities that were the chief patrons. Although popular culture can be seen as a more reliable gauge of the attitudes and preoccupations of the majority of people than the products of elite, just as today, economic and power relationships played a part in medieval production.
2. By primary image, I mean wall-painting, reliefs and other 'public' works. Generally speaking, subject and treatment are usually found first in the more elite miniatures and then later in works for the public, often in an adapted form.
3. The anonymity of medieval painters and sculptors, the styles of scriptoria and workshops (Brink 2001; Spronk 2011) preclude idiosyncratic artistic expression as understood in a modern sense. It can be said that medieval 'art' is community expression, not individual. How far artistic freedom is/was to be found in later periods is a question of the patron–artist relationship within the particular context. Even today, we can say that artists are dependent on patrons in the form of museums, collectors and state subsidies. In other words, almost all professional images can be seen as (also) expressing what someone other than the artist thinks.
4. Mâle was a prolific writer: better known works include *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France: Etude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Age et ses sources d'inspiration* (1908) and *Religious Art: From the Twelfth to the Eighteenth Century* (1949). Warburg's writings were not really publishable; the best account of his ideas is to be found in Ernst Gombrich's *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (1970).
5. In particular, chapter 1 in which he discusses method.
6. While the value of negative evidence is always debatable, it is reasonable to assume that if a particular subject is not found or is only sparsely found in a period, medium or area, while other subjects are found, then the lack of the subject under investigation is not due solely to external considerations or loss over time, but was not of particular importance in the selected areas.
7. It must be remembered that lighting and furnishings can alter how something appears, and polychrome was normal in the Middle Ages. Even if this has been restored, it is as well to take into account how conscientiously this and other restoration work has been done.
8. Again, allowances must be made for the researcher's own perception of earlier scholars' copies.
9. For similar questions in other fields see Glukhov & Glukhova (this volume) and Haukur Þorgeirsson (this volume), for diachronic strategies and problems, see Frog (this volume).
10. Standard elements are found in a majority of works of a certain area or period. All of these and the relationships between them should be noted in order to come to a general idea of what was seen as an adequate representation.
11. For example, the difference in the incidence of the Fall of Man in England and the Germanic countries in the early 11th century indicates very different attitudes. The change from the 'living Christ' crucifixions to the 'dead Christ' depictions is indicative of a fundamental shift in attitude towards human–divine relationships. (Bradley 2010b.)
12. Another relatively common tradition – certainly in cribs – is to conflate the adoration of the shepherds with that of the magi – or the coming of the magi, events narrated in different gospels (Luke 2 and Matthew 2 respectively), e.g. the 12th century nativity window at Canterbury Cathedral or Ghirlandaio's 'Nativity'.
13. For example, giving Adam an iron shod spade to till and clothing him in the roughest of animal skins indicate the perception of a difficult life outside paradise. Another example is to be found in Paris, Bibliothèque Geneviève, ms. 8 f.7v, where contrary to most images of the expulsion from Paradise, Adam puts his arm protectively around Eve, and thereby gives another reading than the usual interpretation.
14. Sindig-Larsen (1984) was instrumental in the development of my ideas, particularly his insistence that church art must be seen in the context of the liturgy of the period. See also Hourihane et al. 2003.
15. Naturally this also applies to a greater or lesser extent to all periods. The role of the family, attitudes to violence and gender relationships, for example, are all expressed in modern visual media.

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The Parallax Approach: Situating Traditions in Long-Term Perspective

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Drawing on models from historical linguistics and philology, the Parallax Approach is a method and methodological framework for investigating the history of a tradition or other phenomenon of cultural expression. It is particularly well-suited to developing long-term perspectives and to developing understandings of socially established synchronic variation within a corpus (i.e. different local and regional forms), especially where reflexes of a common tradition are found across diverse cultures. The development of methods and methodologies for the diachronic study of traditions has atrophied across the past half-century: those employed in earlier research were rejected as research paradigms shifted focus to synchronic performance, variation, genre-systems, meaning-generation, and so forth. These shifts simultaneously overthrew the earlier diachronic research on methodological grounds while the shift to a synchronic focus

precluded interest in or motivation to renovate earlier diachronic methods or to produce alternatives. The Parallax Approach is developed to offer new possibilities for historical perspectives on traditions. It seeks to circumvent and resolve problems of earlier methods by advancing a methodology appropriate to modern understandings of social, cultural and semiotic processes.

This method may be applied to a range of cultural phenomena. These include traditions which develop social variation rapidly (modern slang, children's traditions of play); genres characterized by semiotics, mode of expression and communicative function rather than specific texts or contents (e.g. laments, insult verses, political speeches); genres characterized by socially maintained *textual entities* (proverbs, ballads); as well as more flexibly reproduced genres characterized by conventional content such as specific narratives describable in terms of *extra-*

textual entities (legends, fairytales).¹ The method can also be applied to small formal units such as the poetic formulae (cf. Haukur Þorgeirsson, this volume) or kennings (cf. Osborne, this volume), as well as more broadly applied to Jill Bradley's (this volume) 'visual vocabulary' and larger patterns of semiotic cultural competence (cf. Glukhov & Glukhova, this volume).

In addition to its value for historical study, the Parallax Approach constructs a platform for understanding synchronic differences across living traditions. Tradition, by definition, actualizes connections with the past through cultural practices, and therefore cannot be fully understood without consideration of the past that has given rise to it. More recent performance-oriented approaches to folklore have a synchronic focus (cf. Sykäri, this volume) and are generally ill-equipped for considering socio-historical processes. The platform provided by the Parallax Approach is complementary to performance-oriented approaches by situating them in relation to socio-historical processes that extend through the present. The contextualization of traditions in social processes is what distinguishes the Parallax Approach from early diachronic approaches. This is essential to the analysis of any data produced through an application of the method.

This introduction to the Parallax Approach will draw examples primarily from mythology and mythological narrative. The social and semiotic centrality of mythology allows these traditions a *longue durée* comparable to that of languages and language ideologies. This *longue durée* makes fundamental processes of historical variation more readily observable. Mythology therefore provides a valuable model for approaching other traditions in which innovations may become established much more rapidly, just as conservative oral-poetic traditions can provide a valuable model for considering formulaic language in more changeable unmarked discourse.² A *longue durée* makes it possible to paint historical developments swiftly and in broad strokes, without scrutinizing subtleties of a tradition to reveal variation – thereby losing a reader in a labyrinth of details.

Rather than illustrating the method through a particular case study, the present overview is developed from several earlier studies to which the reader will be referred for examples and further discussion. Discussion opens by introducing the fundamentals of a parallax model followed by theoretical considerations that provide an essential background for considering social variation. Most diachronic studies will face scattered and fragmentary textual and contextual data that cannot provide:

a solid field of observation conducive to the understanding of prime 'causes' or sources of variation, i.e. the mental processes of oral textualization and construction of meaning. (Honko 2000: 17.)

Some strategies for identifying material for comparison and necessary distinctions associated with that process are therefore outlined. Contextualization is highlighted for approaching available data as outcomes of socio-historical processes in the development of *continuum models* of historical developments. 'Ethnocultural substratum' is introduced as a tool for lateral indexing across these models. Overall, the Parallax Approach is oriented to developing broad systemic models of the historical development of cultural semiotics. These models are intended to construct relevant frames of reference for case studies in future research.

Metaphor and Principles

The term 'parallax' is employed here as a descriptive metaphor for addressing the relative 'depth' of cultural phenomena in history. A 'parallax' is the difference in the apparent position of an object from two or more lines of sight. The relative distance of the object is gauged by the intersection of those two lines, just as the parallax of our two eyes enables our continuous, intuitive sense of visual depth perception, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The Parallax Approach is inherently comparative and diachronically oriented: two or more forms of a tradition are approached, considering which developments are 'closer' or 'farther away' as perceived in what may be

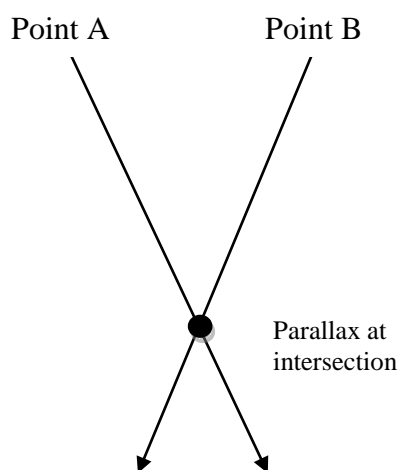


Figure 1. Illustration of a parallax.

a largely synchronic corpus, or in very different corpora. The Parallax Approach is built on the premise that *conventionally established variation between historically related phenomena is the outcome of diachronic social processes*. From this it follows that *developments that characterize conventionally established variation are relevant indicators of said diachronic social processes*. The distribution of the tradition and the developments characterizing its specific forms are gauged at intersections of relative historical ‘depth’ – i.e. their probable points or periods of intersection along a continuum of relative chronology. Intersections may potentially be very broad, possibly spanning hundreds of years. An investigation may begin by simply estimating a general *terminus ante quem* [‘terminus before which’] and/or *terminus post quem* [‘limit after which’] of the object of research. Such *termini* will almost certainly be in relative terms. For example, a tradition must exist in some form before it can spread to be found in different cultures. This reveals a relative *terminus* (or *termini*) *ante quem* for the tradition’s emergence – i.e. it had to emerge ‘before’ it spread and changed – (which is simultaneously a *terminus ante quem* for spread and change ‘after’ emergence. At the opposite end of the historical continuum, the tradition can be framed in long-term perspective in relation to the earliest identifiable linguistic-cultural heritage (e.g. Proto-Indo-European), which in the vast majority of cases will present a

discontinuity and thus a *terminus post quem*. A few such simple distinctions rapidly describe a complex relative chronology – albeit without defining whether the chronology spans five years or ten thousand. The correlation of diverse evidence may also prove mutually informative, especially in cross-cultural comparisons where a broader history of contacts often provides a general frame for when contacts were probable or improbable. For example, it may be difficult to assess the relative depth of culture-specific developments and thus a *terminus ante quem* for cultural exchange in one culture, while another culture may present evidence from an early period likely to post-date exchange, as illustrated in Figure 2.

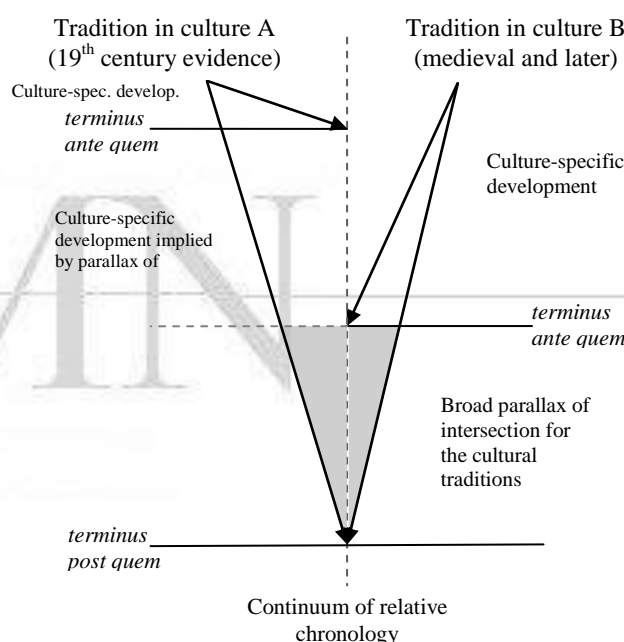


Figure 2. Simplified visual representation of developing a ‘parallax’ through cross-cultural comparative evidence. Practicalities of a two-dimensional diagram limit the number of traditions represented (cf. Figures 6–7). Comparison across only two cultures is normally highly problematic.

Assessing the relative historical depth of developments in a tradition along a relative chronology is an essential step in approaching these developments and the emergence of a tradition itself as relevant indicators of socio-historical processes. The resulting continuum model allows the development of interfaces between a particular tradition and a plurality of other data (Figure 3).

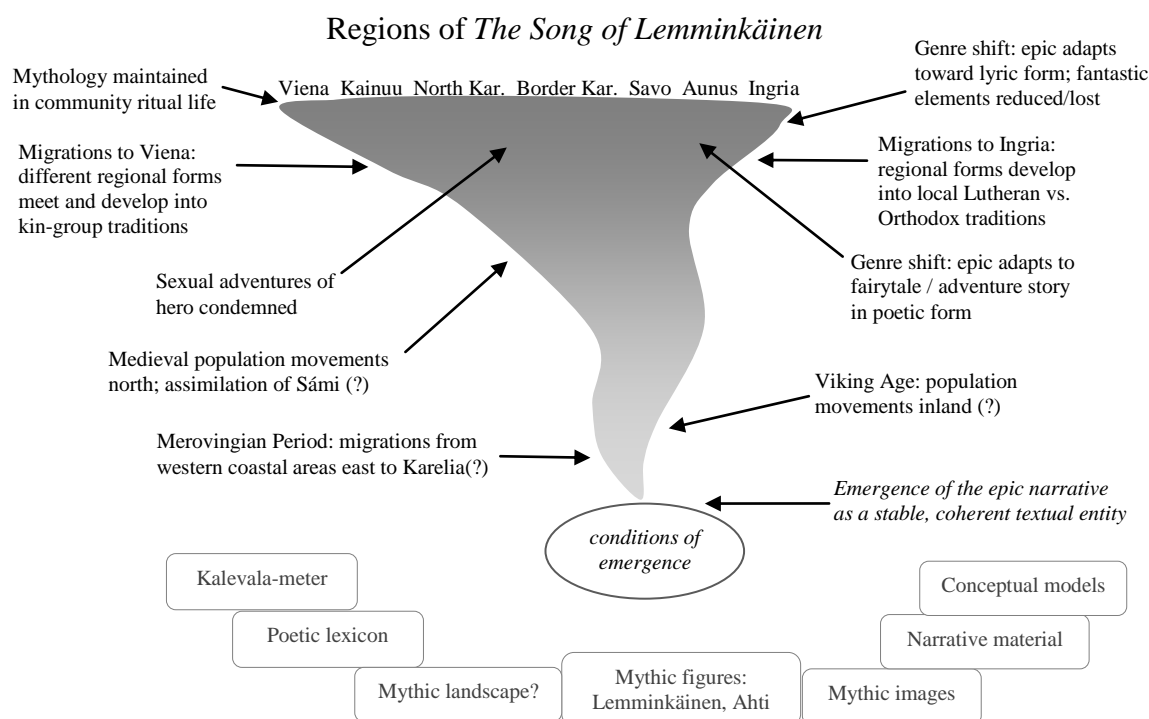


Figure 3. Visual representation of the history of the Kalevala-meter epic poem known as *The Song of Lemminkäinen*, documented from the southern coasts of the Gulf of Finland (Ingria) to the White Sea (Viena) (see further Frog 2010: 72–102). The diagram illustrates broad regional patterns that can be identified as outcomes of social processes. These include genre-shifts (indicators of changes in valuation and social practices), changing interpretations (indicators of changes in social values), migrations resulting in diverse local forms (indicators of different regional forms prior to migrations; of later historical differentiation of social identities in the singing tradition). Social processes become opaque in earlier periods, but the spread of the song as a text may be connected to migrations and language spread. The date of the song's emergence is unknown, but dependent on certain conditions already established in the cultural environment (e.g. the poetic meter) and/or which are probable owing to comparative evidence.

These principles are by no means new: Latin expressions for tools in analysis betray their roots in 19th century philology – which should not, however, be confused with employing 19th century methodologies (cf. Leslie, this volume). The Parallax Approach is, in contrast, built on a usage-based approach to folklore with methods employed in historical linguistics adapted to other elements of cultural expression as semiotic phenomena.

Espen Suenson (this volume) emphasizes that method is intimately bound to theory. The theory of folklore on which the Parallax Approach is developed leads it to differ from many earlier diachronic methodologies in two important respects. First, it is not oriented to 'reconstruction'.³ Rather than chasing after 'original' forms, this is a framework for developing an abstract, descriptive model of a tradition and its history providing a frame of reference for discussion. This is accomplished through the identification of relevant indicators of historical change and correlating these on a long-term continuum. Herein is

concealed the second point: rather than an 'origin' of a tradition as a terminus for investigation, the contemporary context of that 'origin' requires consideration – as does that which preceded it – in order for the significance of the process of emergence to become recognizable (e.g. what is it different from). For example, simply dating the commercialization of the internet to the 1980s says nothing of how it revolutionized our lives. The identification and correlation of historical continuities and discontinuities, both in and across cultural phenomena, constructs a continuum model that can be related to social and historical processes.

Research in the 19th and early 20th century not infrequently took an ideal form or interpretation as a point of departure when constructing a model of a tradition's history. Within the Parallax Approach, the development of a continuum model should begin from one extreme with individual examples, building progressively to local, regional, cultural and cross-cultural

comparisons (cf. Lord 1960: 49). This is intended to avoid approaching local or isolated forms according to preconceptions of a tradition as a whole. The opposite end of the continuum should be situated at an extreme against which continuity and change can be considered. In principle, this should begin with whatever can be abstracted concerning a linguistic-cultural heritage, however general (and which may emerge through a wide parallax of cross-cultural comparisons).⁴ Individual examples and localized forms must be kept in dialogue with both other local forms and the continuities and contrasts with earlier eras. The continuum model develops though increasing numbers of indicators of relative depths. Before introducing the method further, it is necessary to turn first to aspects of theory and methodology, which significantly shape how information is produced with the method.

A Usage-Based Approach to Variation

All traditions and other semiotic phenomena only have reality at the subjective level of the individual and the emerging intersubjective spaces of small-group communities.⁵ Within that frame, tradition functions as an “enabling referent” (Foley 1995: 213). In other words, each individual handles and manipulates a tradition on the basis of a personal, subjective knowledge and understanding with expectations concerning the knowledge and understandings of others. Others interpret expression on the basis of what they subjectively know and understand with expectations about the speaker or performer. This negotiation of subjective understandings is described as ‘intersubjective’. Subjective and intersubjective understandings develop through exposure to and participation in cultural practices across a full spectrum of cultural activity – from epic poetry and proverbs to parody and contesting discourse. The subjective reality of a tradition is therefore always bounded by both the space and time that describe the limits of an individual’s experience on the one hand, and by the negotiation of that understanding through social processes on the other. This provides an essential model for both slow and rapid changes in the cultural activity of a

tradition as these become socially conventional. Participants in the tradition may nevertheless only be aware of contemporary conventions – conventions which they help to construct and maintain – with no concept of historical variation (cf. Gills 1996).

Traditions function at the level of small-group communities and networks of those communities in interaction. Every tradition is maintained through social practices and has functions in a community (e.g. magical, ritual, socializing, entertainment). Success in those functions does not demand the reconciliation of concepts, beliefs, world-models, etc., across traditions or even across different narratives within a single genre. Once established, participants in a community more frequently accept these without awareness of incongruity or contradiction. The precise processes are dependent on the structures and conventions of the social practices.

Within a community, a tradition is *socially negotiated* as an intersubjective referent. This is particularly apparent in the identity of a narrative as ‘myth’ or ‘epic’ because this identity is a social construction with functions related to group identities, and which is culturally bound to social, semiotic and ideological models.⁶ Myth and epic present foundational modeling systems for a socially negotiated frame of reference in a particular group or society. The social and semiotic centrality of these traditions allows them a *longue durée* comparable to language and language ideologies. This does not mean that variation is absent. The ability for tradition to function as a referent is dependent on its recognisability. Recognisability places constraints on variation as a social process. In other words, an individual may challenge and exceed the limits of recognisability, but that does not mean that the particular use will be successfully recognized, affect social conventions, or even be socially approved (cf. Dégh 1995: 147–148).

Variation also does not occur ‘just anywhere’ in a poem or story. Semantic, structural and functional cores of the tradition are generally very stable in historical transmission. Variation occurs in semantically and structurally ‘light’ tissue between these (see e.g. Siikala 1990: 80–86).⁷ The

expansion or contraction of a narrative with subsidiary adventures, episodes and descriptions is not necessarily significant to those cores in a synchronic context (cf. Honko 1998). This type of variation may have no direct impact on the intersubjective referent of the tradition, although collectively, social trends in this variation shape conventions of acceptable and unacceptable variation more generally. Individual awareness of incongruities may also result in variation in core elements (e.g. reconciliation, synthesis, parodic inversion). This can result in the assertion of innovative adaptations or revisions of a tradition. Nevertheless, the majority of innovations never become socially established – although they may have more subtle impacts in a community (e.g. on ranges of acceptable variation).

Structure interfaces with practicalities of recognisability and conventions maintained through social negotiation. In historical processes of variation, certain broad patterns related to structure in mythological narrative traditions are observable, which are important for consideration when comparing material. First, the compositional elements of a mythic narrative emerge as an indexically bound system. More particularly it is a system with subsystems of elements / compositional units within a structural hierarchy. For example, a scene may be made up of mythic figures, images, motifs, etc. (all referred to here generally as ‘elements’) and these form a system in a set of relationships. One level down in the hierarchy, individual images and narrative motifs of a scene may be constituted of their own, tight subsystem of particular elements; one level up, the scene can be one

of several in an episode (each being comprised of its own system of elements). The episode may, in its turn, be one of several in a narrative, and the narrative one of several in a cycle. Variation tends to be at the level of compositional units ordered within this hierarchy, and resists ‘jumping’ between units at the next higher level. In other words, it remains at the level of episodes in a narrative, scenes in an episode, etc., but motifs will not normally ‘jump’ between scenes, and scenes will not move freely from one episode to another unless two or more are synthesized into a single structural unit (cf. Figure 4).

The system of compositional elements within a structural unit may be reorganized, collapsed, expanded or synthesized with another, but variation appears generally constrained by the structural hierarchy. At each level, the system of essential material in each structural unit tends, in historical processes, either to remain intact (even in radical adaptations) or to break down (and be omitted as a structural unit). In other words, the process of social negotiation inclines each (significant) unit to extremes of stability or collapse rather than fluid flexibility in the middle of the spectrum of variation (cf. Osborne, this volume).⁸ This appears to result because an individual unit is semantically and/or pragmatically significant – i.e. it signifies something – and its constituent elements function as its signifiers (even at the level of scenes brought together to signify an episode, or episodes to signify a narrative). Thus variation tends to occur in the practical realization (or reinterpretation) of the semantic and/or pragmatic significance of one unit through its signifiers at one level lower in

narrative														
episode									episode					
scene			scene			scene			scene			scene		
figure	image	motif	figure	image	motif	figure	image	motif	figure	image	motif	figure	image	motif

Figure 4. Illustration of a hierarchy of compositional units in mythological narratives. ‘|’ represents a structural boundary between units within a higher unit of the hierarchy; ‘||’ represents a threshold at the next higher level of the hierarchy. At each level of the hierarchy, variation tends to occur in the configuration of compositional units one level below (separated by ‘|’), while ‘||’ presents a threshold across which variation will not normally occur.

the hierarchy, like that of an episode through its scenes (cf. Tarkka 2012).

According to this model, comparisons will normally be at the level of structural units and their constituents. Because narratives are sequenced according to some logic of relations between 'events', pragmatics of those relations place constraints on variation in organization (e.g. a journey follows the hero's departure and precedes his arrival, whereas the order of obstacles on his journey may easily vary if there is no causal progression from one to the next). Socially established revision of such structural pragmatics should not be dismissed as 'random': it is normally an indicator of reinterpretation, revaluation or change in function. When crossing between cultures, the system(s) of elements making up a narrative may be 'translated' according to equivalent cultural figures (e.g. 'thunder-god') or motifs (e.g. 'magical confrontation'). However, the indexical system of core elements and essential structural pragmatics are normally recognizably maintained (cf. Frog 2010; 2011a).

Acceptance through social negotiation requires that innovations must resonate appropriately with the interests, concerns and ideologies of other individuals in the community who are also willing to socially represent or adapt the new form (see Converse 1964). Radical changes and redefinitions to socially central figures, images, narratives, etc., are not likely to be accepted and become established without resistance. Where these become socially established, they can be considered relevant indicators of the social processes that produced them. In mythological traditions, historical variation in core elements is normally connected to *a*) the emergence or assertion of a new function, interpretation or significance that becomes socially established and advances to a dominant form; or *b*) the loss of social relevance or dislocation from traditional functions. These processes are frequently responses to contacts across communities or cultures that introduce new traditions, models for cultural practices and/or ideologies. As a tradition becomes divested of particular significance and functions, it becomes increasingly opened to flexible

variation (i.e. variation and adaptation are less likely to be socially contested because the material is less mythically vital and/or less familiar in the community). At the same time, the tradition often retains recognisability as culturally weighted material, providing it with great semiotic and rhetorical potential as a social resource. In mythological material, socially established variation (and variation in general) appears to have a direct relation to the degree to which social functions maintain connections to the ritual life of the community and/or some level of belief traditions.

The structural interrelations of genres or traditions can be approached through the biological metaphor of a 'tradition ecology' (see e.g. Honko 1981b; 1985; Hafstein 2001), according to which changes within one tradition impact others on the model of an ecosystem. Any 'new' tradition is always situated in an established semiotic system, cultural environment and arenas of discourse (complete with ideologies and a full 'ecology' of traditions). It will be received in those frames, which may include identification in discourse with a 'foreign' group identity (cf. Frog 2012a; 2012b). This is particularly significant for myths and belief legends, because these interface with semiotic and conceptual modeling systems. Where those modeling systems do not align, that interface will not succeed in the new cultural environment (whether among or across linguistic-cultural groups). Myth and epic, for example, do not as a rule retain their status and quality as 'myth' or 'epic' when entering a new cultural environment unless *a*) the new cultural environment shares a sufficient common framework of ideology (e.g. Orthodox Christian cultures); or *b*) the myth(s) and/or epic(s) are adapted in conjunction with changes in an ideology and/or understandings of social identity (e.g. conversion to Christianity). This is precisely because of their social and semiotic centrality – their socially negotiated interface with group identities and culturally bound social, semiotic and ideological models.

Adaptation into a new system is a social process of finding value and relevance in that context. Similarly, myth and epic must either adapt or be displaced from their status in the

wake of radical historical changes in conceptions of group identity and ideologies. These conceptions and ideologies are themselves normally conjoined with, and propagated through, a new essential modeling system of myth and epic with associated cultural practices and ritual specialists. Talented performers not infrequently assert their identities, authority and ideologies through variation (cf. Tarkka 2005: 179–182). Specialization also offers these individuals a richer perspective, increasing the likelihood that they will perceive relationships between traditions, attempt to reconcile incongruities or bring vernacular traditions into accord with a changed, predominating (e.g. Christian) worldview (cf. Converse 1964: 214–219). Sources and informants that are qualitatively the ‘best’ may thus not accurately reflect social conventions (cf. Frog 2010: 225–229; Bradley, this volume). At the same time, specialization in a performance tradition and/or as a ritual specialist provides these individuals with a particularly authoritative ‘voice’ in the process of social negotiation, with the possibility to influence social convention (cf. Siikala 1978: 13). Radical changes in a traditional mythology frequently appear directly connected to an institution of ritual specialist as a *conduit of authority* for the tradition, rather like pillars in the process of social negotiation.⁹

A primary factor in the persistence of North Finnic mythology was the continuity of the associated institution of ritual specialist, and the participation of the mythology in a complex of ideology and cultural practices (see further Frog 2012b). A narrative or mythic figure does not persist in isolation. They are always characterized by contexts, applications, interpretations – and they are always integrated and reintegrated into systems of traditions. For example, in North Finnic kalevalaic mythology, myths circulated as Kalevala-meter poems – *textual entities* – and they disappeared where kalevalaic poetry was no longer used (cf. Figure 3). Individual poems did not survive independently: multiple narratives circulated together and in relation to one another or they all dropped out of circulation. Context-specific functions (like providing a narrative introduction to a

magical charm) could delay this process, but the historical maintenance of these traditions and figures was always connected to broader systems of the cultural activity of mythology both within and across communities. If a tradition is not propagated beyond a single community, it will not maintain significance through long-term socio-historical processes.

Identifying Elements for Comparison

When employing the Parallax Approach, elements drawn on for comparison should be identified with consideration for their number and the relationships between them. Any such comparison requires:

- Producing a contextualized survey of sources, in order to assess reliability
- Assessing the probability that examples represent conventional forms
- Constructing abstracted models of features, elements and their relationships, structures, etc., that can be reasonably considered conventional in a region or culture

As Jill Bradley (this volume) has emphasized and discussed, the first step in approaching a particular tradition or other cultural phenomenon is to attempt what I have elsewhere described as a “mostly-exhaustive” survey of evidence and examples (Frog 2011a: 81). From this survey, a descriptive model of the tradition and its conventional reflexes or redactions is abstracted, rather like the description of a tale-type (cf. Uther 2004; af Klintberg 2010). Constructing an abstract description of a tradition is a methodological tool to provide a point of reference for discussion and analysis. The description will naturally minimize variation and will not necessarily reflect all forms of the tradition. This simultaneously minimizes the risk of selectively handling examples while highlighting the requirement to consider variation within a regional or cultural tradition before making comparisons across them.

This sort of survey and working model also reveals whether elements or episodes under comparison are unusual or exceptional within one tradition, or are only found in sources of a certain type. Assessing conventional forms should be at the intersection of qualitative and

quantitative data. Patterns in the distribution of variation should be considered first, beginning with individual examples contextualized as much as possible, and building up to regional and cultural patterns (cf. Lord 1960: 49). A single example is not necessarily conventional or even local, and the more limited the examples, the less can be said about a local or cultural tradition (cf. Frog 2011a: 84, 87). Unique adaptations or reinterpretations are to be expected (cf. e.g. Looorits 1932: 63–64; Frog 2010: 200–201). The descriptive model is not intended to account for these. It should instead provide a point of reference in approaching and discussing them (see further Bradley, this volume).

The elements and their variation should be contextualized in terms of how they are used within the broader tradition. The more widely and flexibly an element is employed, the greater the probability that its appearance is a result of variation or innovation rather than reflecting historical persistence. Elements may also vary according to semantic or pragmatic equivalence within a broad category (e.g. ‘monster’, ‘desired object’; cf. cross-cultural adaptation above; cf. also Nordvig, this volume). As a rule, the more minimal a semiotic element, the less likely it is to exhibit variation. The more limited or exclusive its uses, the more likely that these reflect a historical continuity, and that this continuity will be historically related to corresponding uses in other cultures with a history of contact. For example, the epithet ‘father’ is a minimal element that exhibited long-term continuities as an identity-marker characterizing the dominant sky-god (rather than all gods) in Indo-European cultures, which broad comparative evidence suggests goes back to Proto-Indo-European **Dyēus* [‘Sky’] (West 2007: 170–171). This identity-marker and its long-term continuities are not random: they simultaneously reflected and affirmed an Indo-European ideology of patriarchal authority (Anthony 2007: 328). It also interfaced with the *hieros gamos*, the mythic marriage/sexual union of the sky-god and the earth-goddess, as a complementary identity-marker (West 2007: 181–183; cf. Eliade 1958: 51–52). The *hieros gamos* is

also a minimal element. It is not a narrative, but rather an abstract *conceptual schema* (see Frog 2011b: 12–13). As such, it may provide a narrative core for specific myths (cf. Steinsland 1991) or a more abstract model for understanding natural processes, potentially actualized through ritual practice (cf. Haavio 1959: 84–86, 101–102; Salo 2006: 36–44).

Taken separately, these elements are so minimal that their individual continuities only offer varying degrees of probability. However, correspondences in elements are cumulative: the more there are, the less likely that an overall parallel is wholly accidental. Diverse parallel elements under consideration become complementary, such as multiple identity-markers of the dominant sky-god. Complementarity becomes increasingly compelling when the phenomena compared share a larger, denser number of elements. It seems self-evident that two versions of the same proverb, riddle, poem or narrative are related precisely because the cumulative correspondences at the levels of textual and/or extra-textual entities cannot be reasonably attributed to accident or coincidence.

It is essential to contrast comparisons with potential alternative explanations. Comparisons inevitably emerge as sets of probabilities rather than one unequivocally ‘true’ and several ‘false’ explanations, but these probabilities become mutually reinforcing or contrastive. The accumulation of comparisons produces patterns of likelihood against which individual cases may accord, increasing the probability of participation in that pattern, or contrast, decreasing a case’s probability of being an inconsistent and isolated exception. The likelihood of a relation also increases when parallel traditions occur in geographical groupings, as is the case of several traditions in the Circum-Baltic region (cf. Vaitkevičienė & Vaitkevičius 2011). Such patterns across traditions are a relevant indicator of cross-cultural exchange that simultaneously provide a pattern and context in which particular cases can be considered. As in historical linguistics, it is not necessary to demonstrate every example: each example may remain an individual probability while the pattern emerges clearly (cf. Frog 2011d); a

correlation of systems of elements and material may be demonstrable although it may be impossible to resolve precisely which of those elements belonged to the system already in earlier period (Frog 2011c: 32).

One noteworthy potential relevant indicator of historical continuities within such a complementary system is when the context-specific use of an element is inconsistent with its function, significance or conventions of use in other contexts. For example, attributing thunder to another figure than to the conventional thunder-god may be a relevant indicator of changes in the roles and significance of mythic figures (Frog 2011c: 31; 2012a). Another potential relevant indicator of historical continuities is when parallels among the systems of elements under comparison extend to complex (e.g. pragmatic) relationships between them rather than simply co-occurrence. For example, the role of an image (e.g. instigating action) and relationships between mythic figures (e.g. adversaries) may interface with functions in an episode, although the specific features are culture-dependent (cf. Frog 2010: 122–126); images and relationships between figures may otherwise be complemented by etymologies, although functions are radically different (cf. Dronke 1969; also Leslie, this volume). The structural pragmatics of a narrative may be particularly significant, as in the case of the aetiology of thunder found in the Circum-Baltic myth of the Theft of the Thunder-Instrument (ATU 1148b), where a different conception of thunder in the narrative requires changes in the narrative plot's structure (Frog 2011a: 85, 91–92; cf. Figures 6–7 below).

There is no strict mathematical equation by which probabilities can be assessed – data is interpreted in relation to quality, context and quantity. The nature of parallels being addressed must also be distinguished – whether a whole narrative (e.g. ATU 1148b), narrative episode (cf. Frog 2010: 94–98), abstract conceptual schema (e.g. *hieros gamos*), or a more atomic narrative motif or image providing a narrative core (cf. Frog 2011c: 31–32). In research, both distinguishing the scope of comparison ('part' versus 'whole') and the transposition of interpretations across examples or cultures

have historically proven problematic. Caution is required not to exaggerate the concreteness of parallels or working models. The scope of material to which comparison is relevant should always be clarified (N.B. – the scope may not be consistent across all traditions compared; cf. Frog 2010).

Distribution and Variation

When a tradition is established and its semiotic environment changes, the particular tradition may accordingly lose functions, relevance, and/or change in significance, especially when this is associated with changing ideologies (cf. Osborne, this volume). This is particularly apparent regarding myth and epic, owing to their social and semiotic centrality. Such changes destabilize this centrality, requiring them:

- to change in order to maintain social functions as 'myth' or 'epic'
- to be maintained purely in established secondary functions or referential uses (e.g. secular entertainment, charms, sayings)
- to find new functions (e.g. folktale, legend)
- to drop out of circulation, allowing their constitutive images, mythic figures and episodes to potentially be adapted to new contexts as compelling social resources (e.g. in other narrative genres)

Cross-community contact within a cultural area appears to have a significant role in how traditions develop and adapt to changing cultural circumstances (cf. Frog & Stepanova 2011). The development may be radical and potentially aggressive, such as the assertion of Odin as a dominant sky-god over (Proto-Germanic) **Tīwaz*, and as father of the thunder-god Thor in a *hieros gamos* myth. It may also be a less aggressive revaluation or reinterpretation of a narrative in light of changing social values (Frog 2010: 84, 88; cf. Figure 3, above). adapting it to new technologies (Frog 2011c: 32), changing conceptual models (Frog 2011a: 85), or contexts of performance (cf. Siikala 2002a). In other words, strategies for adapting the tradition as a valuable social resource in changing cultural circumstances may themselves be spread. This process gives rise to regional and, more broadly, cultural forms

or general cultural patterns in a tradition (Frog 2011a: 92–93; cf. ‘genre shifts’ in Figure 3).

In cases where a tradition has a potentially very long history in a broad linguistic-cultural area, the forms of that tradition may nevertheless be fairly uniform owing to an internal spread of a dominant form, while varying considerably from the corresponding traditions in adjacent cultures (cf. Frog 2011a: 82; 2011c: 34–35). Diversity across conservatively established regional or cultural forms of a tradition is therefore frequently a relevant indicator of longer histories of internal local development. A rapid spread of a tradition is dependent on meeting social functions, needs and/or interests across multiple and diverse communities. Although traditions need not necessarily hold the same function or relevance in the new environment (cf. Frog 2010: 356–357) and some form of ‘translation’ into the new semiotic system is inevitable (Lotman 1990; cf. Frog 2012b), it is improbable that a tradition would both spread rapidly and change significantly on entering each new cultural environment.¹⁰

Within such considerations, evidence of the cultural activity of a tradition must be taken into account (e.g. was it popular or largely forgotten) and also its multi-functionality. Diversification of functions is a consequence of broad and vital cultural activity. As usage narrows across a large area, the functions that are maintained may not be consistent, thus significant variation in function by region and culture is a potential

relevant indicator of an earlier diversification of functions and possibly a long history. As mentioned above, where a tradition has less cultural activity, social constraints on variation weaken, and the internalized understandings of individuals may be less developed, lacking in broad social support. An isogloss of a tradition with a long history tends to exhibit greater variation at its peripheries. Extensive comparative surveys are lacking, but it can be hypothesized that more recently and rapidly spreading traditions may be more diffuse at the peripheries of an isogloss, but will not necessarily exhibit more significant variation in relation to the overall tradition at the peripheries of that isogloss.

Parallax as Intersection

Comparisons can be made and assessed once the surveys and contextualization of evidence is completed. Where similarities appear attributable to the outcome of diachronic social processes, a parallax of probable intersection is hypothesized for the potential historical intersection of each (major) relevant indicator of change. This comparative tool should (ideally) be applied on localized materials generating models of local traditions, then localized models should be compared to assess parallax intersections, and so forth. Perspectives on the relative ‘depth’ increase progressively on a continuum model as it advances to cross-cultural comparison and continuities or contrasts with earlier eras of linguistic-cultural heritage. The initial

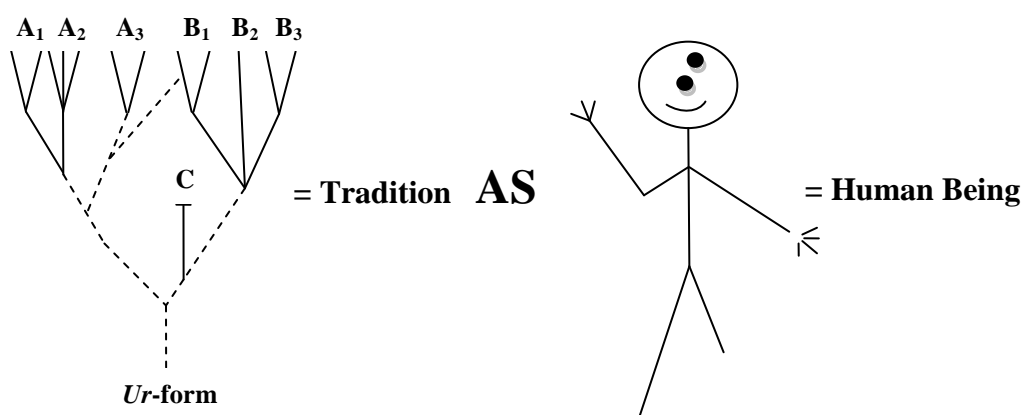
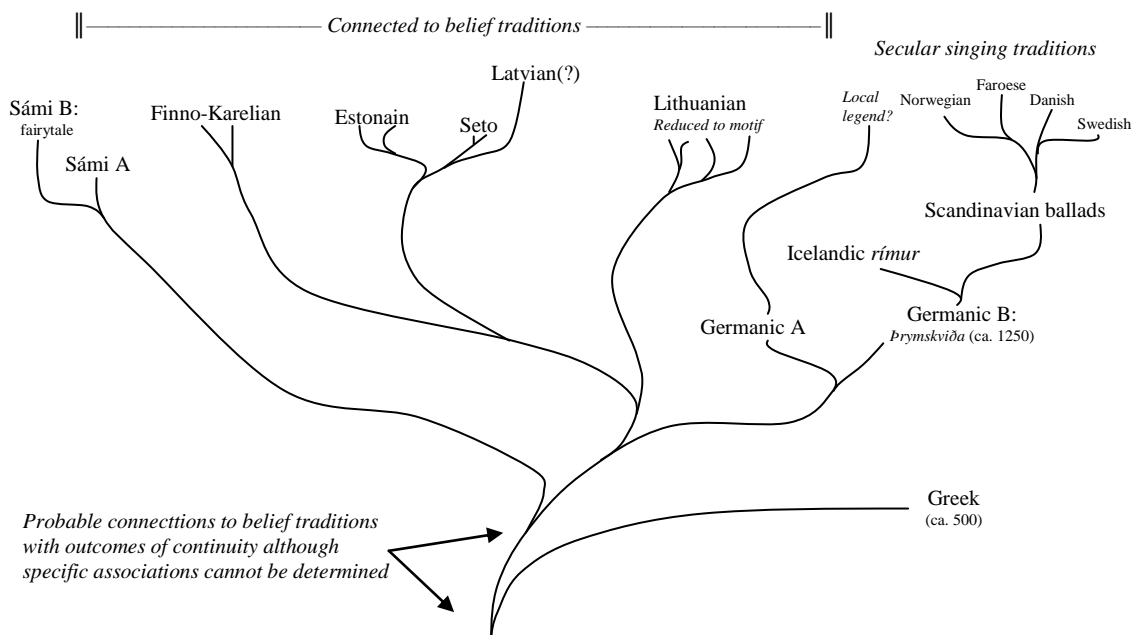


Figure 5. Stick diagram comparison. A stemma model diagram can provide a valuable tool for visualizing contexts and relationships between materials under comparison, much as a stick figure can be used to indicate a hand, foot or eye in relation to other parts of a human being. It nevertheless remains an interpretation, and a minimal outline which may also be misrepresentative.



ATU 1148b: The Theft of the Thunder-Instrument

Figure 6. Potential (and in some respects misrepresentative) stemma model of the Circum-Baltic myth, ATU 1148b (the Theft of the Thunder-Instrument) that could emerge as a working tool during analysis (see Frog 2011a for survey of materials). The connection of ATU 1148b to belief traditions over an extended cross-cultural isogloss presents a high probability of long-term continuities with belief traditions. The stemma model has major disadvantages of discounting ongoing cross-community and cross-cultural contacts as a historical process and also of simplifying and concretizing typological similarities (potentially resulting from such contacts) into a hierarchy of historical relations in a period only approachable at a high level of abstraction and probability.

stages of this process may be diagrammed according to a classic ‘stemma’ model as a working tool. Although such a tool can provide a point of departure for developing a dynamic continuum model, it may misleadingly oversimplify the representation of the tradition, as illustrated in Figure 5.

In most cases, the ‘deeper’ the model is projected into history, *a*) the higher the degree of abstraction in the model owing to realities of variation, and *b*) the more that model becomes exclusively concerned with formal elements because meanings, uses and interpretations can vary considerably over longer periods of time. Variation is cumulative as a historical process: the ‘deeper’ these models penetrate into the past, the more they shift from portraying ‘facts’ to probabilities. This problematizes stemma modelling, which inevitably resolve probabilities into specific relations. This does not necessarily compromise findings of continuities, but it leads to thinking of those continuities in terms of a ‘map’, such as that in Figure 6. Without an apparatus for historical processes of cross-community or

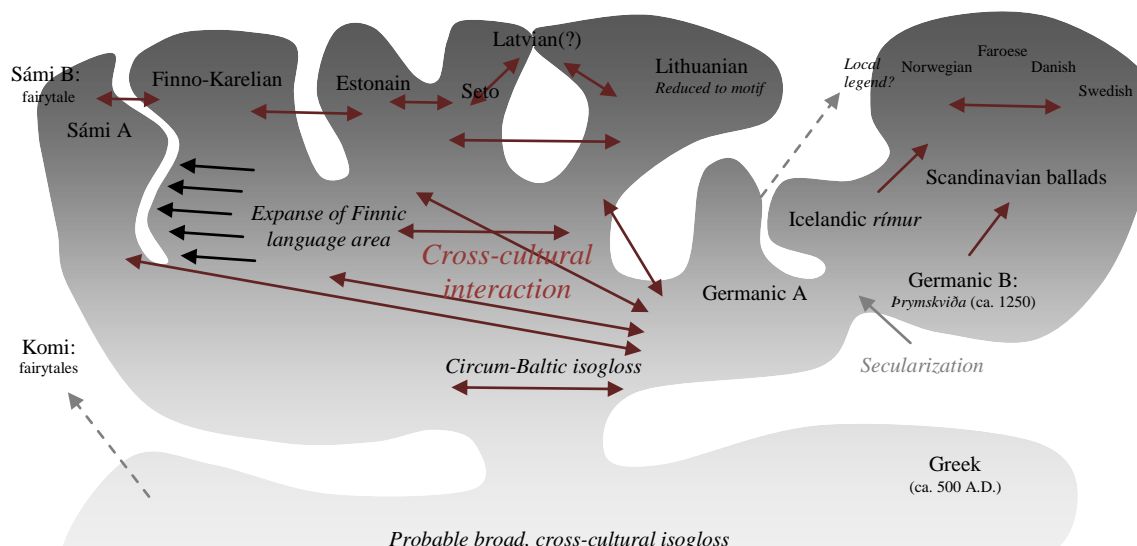
cross-cultural interactions, beginning with typological groupings may result in confusing a continuum of typological similarities with a historical progression of developments accompanying geographic spread (as was common in uses of the Historical-Geographic Method, on which see Krohn 1926). This can be contrasted with the more dynamic and fluid representation in Figure 7. As Christopher Abram stresses:

Many critical approaches to myth have been founded on the premise that myth is fundamentally stable, and its meanings universal and eternal. (Abram 2011: 48.)

Interpretations change faster than motifs, and in spite of aspirations to (re)construct mythologies as coherent and absolute systems:

Mythic images, concepts and motifs derived from different epochs constitute loosely structured networks open to constant reinterpretation. (Siikala 2002b: 29.)

A complex and coherent narrative in a recent ethnocultural substratum may only be



ATU 1148b: The Theft of the Thunder-Instrument

Origins uncertain: appears independent of either Finno-Ugric / Uralic or Indo-European linguistic-cultural heritages

Figure 7. Abstract and fluid visual representation ATU 1148b evidence situated in relation to historical processes and cultural contact. In contrast to the stemma model, this visualization minimizes variation at the level of local and cultural forms of the tradition and highlights the role of cultural interactions.

approachable in terms of episodes in an earlier era or in some of the cultures in a broader comparison: the longer it has been in use, the less likely it will be found as essentially the same ‘complete’ narrative (cf. Figure 6–7). Continuities in both specific elements and their relationships are often connected with centrality, the range of cultural activity and functions in the tradition. The more long-term the perspective, the more abstractly these must be approached and the more ambiguous the relationships between elements under consideration (cf. Frog 2011c; 2012a).¹¹ Broad, rich data sets may offer remarkably complex pictures as in Figures 6–7, but observations may be largely limited to formal elements, conceptual models, and groupings of these forming associative systems, with little or no insight into earlier meanings, functions and interpretations. This method does not reconstruct historical social or semiotic realities, and very often the eras of transition between developments may remain completely ambiguous.

The developing model should consider the distribution, variation, evidence of contemporary cultural activity, and centrality in use (see Frog 2011a). Relevant indicators that mark processes of development in a

tradition are frequently associated with changes in valuation, ideology or social practices. Relevant indicators of changes dependent on earlier developments may provide key points of reference in developing a *relative* chronology, even if the scope may in some cases be very broad. Nevertheless, a continuum model accounting for distribution and variation does not necessarily resolve whether that relative chronology should be correlated with a time-line of five generations, five centuries, or five thousand years unless it can be *a*) correlated with external points of reference (e.g. medieval sources; archaeological evidence; cross-cultural parallels likely to reflect contact in an earlier historical period), or *b*) situated in a broader systemic model.

As in etymological studies, wider distribution is generally characteristic of a longer history while highly localized variations often appear more recent. Unlike etymological studies and most earlier studies on the history of traditions, the continuum model should always extend beyond the scope of the phenomenon – i.e. consideration must not only be given to its beginning and/or ending, but also to what preceded it, informing the environs of its emergence, and

what followed it, informing the environs where it was no longer significant, relevant or otherwise sustainable (cf. Figures 3 and 7). This may provide essential relevant indicators of change that offer insight into historical processes crucial to understanding the specific tradition and culture.

‘Archaisms’ may, of course, be encountered in isolated or scattered evidence. Potential examples must be contextualized and correlated both with contexts of use as well as broader patterns that characterize the region and traditions found there. Particular attention should be given to the social and contextual functions of the proposed archaic element and what that tells us about it. Without external points of reference, an example from a single localized area does not justify an element’s identification as ‘archaic’. Evidence from two isolated areas, if a relationship is probable, suggests a historical relationship, but this demands a correlation of specific features. Although the premise *nothing comes from nothing* is generally valid for cultural expression, parallel developments remain possible: if both examples are found within a common cultural tradition, it is possible that the same essential conditions led contemporary discourse to similar ‘solutions’ in corresponding semiotic environments (cf. Uspenskij, this volume). Isolated parallels in historically remote cultural areas or across different cultures with a history of contact may be more compelling with fewer points of correspondence because the interaction of essential conditions with the semiotic environment is less likely to produce the same phenomenon accidentally (cf. Stepanova 2011). Nevertheless, without additional relevant indicators or historical isolation of the two traditions, it may not be possible to distinguish whether these have continuity extending as ‘deep’ as the emergence of the tradition or whether the particular element/episode emerged later. Especially problematic is distinguishing relevant indicators of the historical period or circumstances of a tradition’s/element’s emergence from the period and circumstances through which it spread across communities and perhaps across multicultural areas.

A related problem is that changes and revaluations can be transferred through cross-community contact. As noted above, cross-community contact may communicate alternative strategies for using an established tradition, and it may also communicate material that supplements such a tradition (e.g. a new, image, scene, episode, use). The presence or absence of a tradition is thus not identical to the presence or absence of one of its features or elements. This emphasizes the importance of distinguishing the first introduction/emergence of a tradition from the emergence of variations and variant forms (cf. Frog 2011a: 82–83; 2012b).

Investigating the history of a tradition exclusively on the basis of synchronic data found across more or less coherent extended networks of communities is problematic because traditions do not develop within small-group communities in isolation, but rather through networks of small-group communities in interaction, allowing innovations and new exemplars to spread through those networks. Without external points of reference, working models will have a primary value of approaching synchronic variation and understanding the functioning of the tradition as a social resource in synchronic practices. The produced model then provides a frame for approaching specific variation in the corpus and the local meaning-potential of the tradition for its users while interfaces with earlier social processes remain more ambiguous (cf. Figure 3). Models of this sort may also be correlated along with those of other traditions, advancing to broader systemic continuum models for long-term perspectives.

Toward a Systemic Continuum Model

In linguistics, relationships between items and aspects of different languages are normally assessed in terms of formal features (e.g. phonetic sequence), semantics (i.e. what the elements mean or how they are used) and probabilities of historical contacts or relationships between the languages concerned. These linguistic elements are normally at the level of a morphemic signifier embedded within an extensive signification system. In other words, the formal features of

an element constitute a single, definable unit, and those features will only change when there are broader changes in the overall system. Consequently, any assessment of a lexical item is always framed in the context of the language as a system from which its historical development can be construed. This is possible precisely because of the extensive investigation of how signifiers develop historically within the system of the particular language. There is a direct, linear historical continuity between, for example, every Indo-European language and the so-called Proto-Indo-European language from which these derive. Historical linguistics has developed continuum models outlining the relative chronologies of the developmental processes of the different Indo-European languages. On analogy, the Parallax Approach postulates that *a systemic model of the continuum of historical developments within a culture's semiotic system* (including its traditions) *presents a framework for approaching the probability of historical continuities and changes in individual elements*. In other words, the continuum models for different traditions and semiotic phenomena (including the lexicon) can be correlated within a culture as a strategy for developing systemic models for the development of that culture's semiotic system.

Synchronic systemic models outlining a 'tradition ecology' are a relatively recent development (cf. Kamppinen 1989: 37–46). These models remain abstract frames of reference rather than coherent and exhaustive descriptions, but they retain relevance for understanding diachronic processes in traditions (cf. Honko 1981a; 1981b; 1985). Systemic models describing a continuum of historical developments are not available for most traditions. Those that are available tend to be scattered and disconnected from one another, or they are based on problematic premises. Today, contextualizing a particular study and its relevant indicators in relation to other traditions and data will normally require turning to these earlier research surveys and studies executed within methodologies that are incompatible with modern standards or priorities (cf. Goeres, Fisher, this volume). This is a practical reality. Nevertheless, even

a cautious (and conditional) handling of these resources for the development of a narrow systemic model can provide a relevant frame for approaching a particular tradition. As in historical linguistics, the development of a systemic continuum model is not the task of any one researcher: studies in the present will contribute to the development of these extended models in the future rather than concluding them now.

Ideally, examples should be contextualized in relation to, for example, local and regional developments reflecting changes in broad subject domains (e.g. Christian figures generally appearing where vernacular gods were common) and their valuation (e.g. moral criticism of sexual themes), genres (e.g. epic treated as folktale), or a specific narrative (e.g. truncated, expanded or reinterpreted). A systemic model should begin with a comprehensive survey of a specific subject, figure, motif, narrative, genre, subject domain or mode of expression. Consideration should be given to social contexts and functions with the identification of patterns of conventions and variation. The development of continuum models within a culture can then be complemented through the correlation and comparison of multiple long-term continuum models for adjacent cultures. These can offer perspectives on historical processes, as well as possible insights where evidence might otherwise be lacking (cf. Uspenskij, this volume), while cultural contacts may offer crucial insights in the correlation of relative chronologies (cf. Figure 2), as has been the case in historical linguistics.

Ethnocultural Substrata and the Continuum Model

The development of a systemic modeling system requires lateral indexing across the continuum models developed for individual traditions in a cultural milieu. A valuable tool for this is Lauri Harvilahti's (2003: 90–115) *ethnocultural substrate* or *ethnocultural substratum*. Harvilahti proposed this term to describe the broad synchronic system of fundamental elements (language, poetics, images, motifs, figures, narratives, etc.) that are constitutive of cultural competence. This model can be profitably applied when

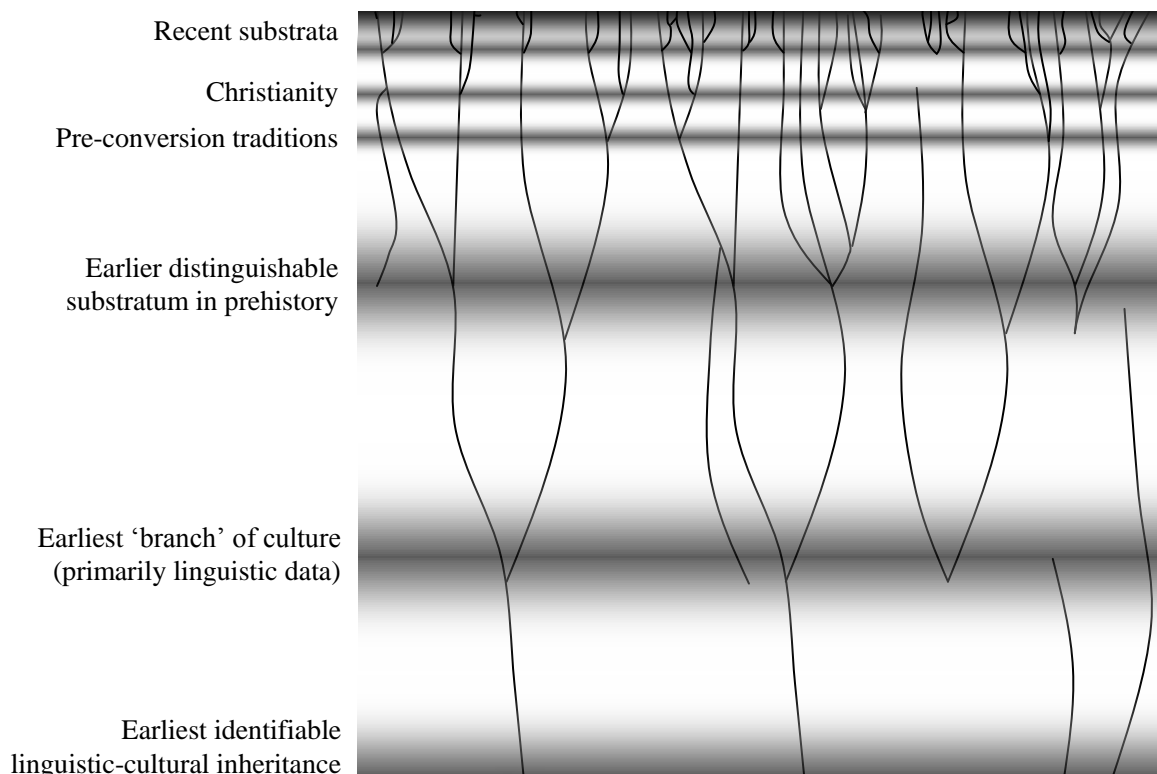


Figure 8. Simple visual representation of ethnocultural substrata (dark horizontal bands) as lateral indices across multiple continuum models (vertical stemma diagrams). Each ethnocultural substratum emerges around a 'core' of relevant indicators of change differentiating it from earlier and later periods while the transition between substrata remains largely undefined. 'Deeper' strata become increasingly broad and generalized because variation leads to increased abstraction along individual continuum models and the quantity of material relevant for indexing becomes increasingly limited. The decrease of identifiable material in earlier substrata does not reflect fewer traditions, but rather a much smaller percentage of the tradition ecology that can be discerned – normally the most socially and semiotically central. Comparative evidence may present certain otherwise unattested traditions in earlier substrata that were not maintained (e.g. no reflex of *Dyéus in Germanic).

approaching the fundamentals of the semiotic environments of earlier cultural eras (see Frog 2011c). Two advantages of this model are *a*) periods or historical 'layers' along a chronology are not isolated from one another, but rather each stratum is implicitly a synthesis of the preceding stratum into a 'present' cultural environment, producing historical continuities; and *b*) all continuities have currency and relevance within that 'present' as elements in the context of a broader cultural and semiotic system that shapes their significance and meaning-potential.

This tool cross-indexes relevant indicators of historical change in individual traditions. In other words, it presents a cross-section of correlated continuum models, making a step toward a systemic model of the continuum of historical developments within a culture's semiotic system (see Figure 8). A substratum

model is generated by identifying a 'core' element that appears to be a key relevant indicator of historical change (Frog 2011c: 24–25, 32–34), such as the identification of Odin as the dominant sky-god rather than an inherited reflex of Proto-Indo-European *Dyéus ['Sky'] (cf. West 2007: 168). This is correlated with relevant indicators that appear directly associated with that change. The substratum model extends laterally. This can begin with probable structurally dependent changes that become correlated cores for further indexing (e.g. the identification of Thor as a son of Odin redefines Thor), while additional changes may be semantically implicit (e.g. changes in ritual practices). (See Frog 2011c: 25–30.) Relevant indicators can also be indexed from social and historical processes, archaeological evidence, and so forth (cf. Frog 2012b). A substratum model thus constructs a systemic contextualizing

model for approaching diachronic processes generally, minimizing variation to highlight changes between periods.

The substratum model outlines essential features of these potential ‘packages’ of developments. Taken together, the correlation of potential relevant indicators increases their individual probabilities of continuity as parts of a complex process. Furthermore, it also provides a contextualizing frame that can increase the probability that correspondences in minimal elements (e.g. mythic figure or role + narrative motif) reflect meaningful relationships or otherwise make them appear arbitrary in relation to broader social processes (Frog 2011c: 30–32). As a modeling tool, an ethnocultural substratum is concerned with situating changes that provided the essential conditions for the later evidence rather than concretely dating all developments to that period (see further Frog 2011c: 28, 32). Although individual examples may be argued and debated, the pattern that emerges is not dependent on any individual case and provides a context for discussion.

Challenges and Possibilities

The Parallax Approach returns to questions of diachronic tradition research with updated theoretical models of tradition and new tools and strategies for investigation. The focus of research methods, paradigms and methodologies in the latter 20th century on the individual and on social functions of folklore are here turned to social processes, complementing both synchronic and diachronic research traditions. The Parallax Approach develops hypothetical abstract working models of relative chronologies for approaching the history of traditions and specific case evidence. These necessarily advance to probabilities, and there may frequently be vast ambiguous gaps in a continuum model (cf. Figure 3). These directions of research are only now reopening and a relative chronology may remain as basic as situating a tradition’s origin between a *terminus ante quem* of two attested forms becoming different, and a *terminus post quem* of ‘the introduction of iron’ (cf. Figure 2) or ‘Proto-Indo-European’ (cf. Figure 7). Nevertheless, even such broad or seemingly

minimal findings may have great potential for development as they are correlated with others, and as increasing numbers of relevant indicators become identified and correlated according to ethnocultural substrata.

The implementation of this method is not without challenges. Striving for extended corpora and their cultural, historical and semiotic contextualization for analysis is labor-intensive. In addition, data does not select and interpret itself, and this is where research findings are most susceptible to corruption owing to the biases and presumptions of a researcher (cf. Suenson, this volume). The general observations and discussion on variation above are intended to provide basic points of reference when approaching comparative material. These should not be misinterpreted as inviolable ‘laws’ but rather common patterns that provide a point of departure for investigation and for considering how traditions function and vary within particular cultural and historical environments.

In the broader history of scholarship, this is also a precarious stage for false tracks and misinterpretations because reliable continuum models and ethnocultural substratum models are generally unavailable, while dynamic systemic modeling remains only a future goal. Identifying relevant indicators is particularly significant at this stage – which does not require their resolution through interpretation: their relevance may only become evident through the correlation of continuum models developed in other studies and in other disciplines in the future. Although *why* and *how* are generally the most interesting questions addressed in analyses, interpretations evolve as quickly in research traditions as they do in oral cultures. The most prominent and enduring works in scholarship are therefore those that provide the most comprehensive and detailed representation and overview of primary materials as a resource (cf. Goeres, this volume), and the Parallax Approach presents a new frame in which such resources have multidisciplinary relevance.

Methodologically, the Parallax Approach is oriented to guard against biases and ‘leading the data’. Extended

contextualization, testing hypotheses against alternative explanations, and the correlation of individual continuum models into more dynamic modeling systems all provide safeguards, as does advocating ‘top-down’ modeling – beginning from individual examples and local variation for localized modeling, and advancing to regional and cultural traditions (rather than taking an ideal model of the tradition as the point of departure). Together, these reduce risks of selective or decontextualized use of exceptional examples, isolating hypothesis-specific data sets, or constructing a continuum model in isolation resulting in contrasts with others and with emerging models of ethnocultural substrata. Particularly where data is limited or observations are pursued into more remote ethnocultural substrata, misinterpretations are a hazard. This hazard is decreased when, rather than being based solely on a closed data set, an interpretation is correlated with other continuum models and broader patterns of evidence within a culture.

The Parallax Approach is oriented to guard against biases, yet responsibility inevitably falls to the researcher (cf. Peterson-Lewis, this volume). Nevertheless, even here there is the safeguard that the Parallax Approach is oriented to cooperation and social negotiation as a historical process, and that process of negotiation will work to sort the wheat from the chaff. The over-arching goal of the Parallax Approach is the gradual development of broad, multidisciplinary systemic models for approaching the evolution of traditions and semiotic systems in particular cultures and cultural areas. Studies in the present will be contributions to that future.

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Notes

1. For a discussion of ‘textual entity’ and ‘extra-textual entity’ as analytical terms, see Frog 2011b.
2. Cf. John Miles Foley’s (2002: 199) maxim that “*Oral Poetry works like language, only more so*” within an “overall expressive ecology”.
3. On tendencies of ‘Old Philology’ and their interfaces with current methodologies, see the discussions in Leslie, Fisher, and also Goeres, this volume.
4. Continuities from such a remote era are exceptional and often unnecessary to consider. This may nevertheless initially provide a relevant and interesting frame for discontinuity and change. (See e.g. Frog 2012a; 2012b).
5. The following is a model of tradition according to the theory of the Activating Power of Expression presented in Frog 2010. For a usage-based approach to language, see Tomasello 2003.
6. Myth here describes a quality of content rather than a formal genre, although in some cultures mythological narratives may be conventionally rendered according to a specialized generic form. On the semiotics of myth, see e.g. Cassirer 1925; Barthes 1970; Lotman & Uspenskii 1976; on its social centrality, see further e.g. Eliade 1968 [1963]: esp. 18–20; Doty 2000. Epic here describes a formally qualified narrative genre (which in some cultures may be used to render mythological narratives as well as heroic and/or historical material). The genre of epic is centrally characterized by its social and semiotic functions to which specific formal features are culturally dependent. A semiotic approach to traditional epic as genre is outlined in Frog 2011e; see further also Honko 1998: 20–29; Doty 2000; Foley 2004; Martin 2005.
7. This is particularly apparent in oral poetic traditions: see e.g. Gil’ferding 1894: 24; Lord 1960.
8. Variation as a social process is not identical to variation at the level of individuals, and scattered, isolated examples of a tradition may easily leave an exaggerated impression of social processes of variation precisely because they tend to be decontextualized from local and regional social conventions.
9. See further Frog 2010: 137, 232; 2011c: 32–34; on ‘conduits’ of transmission of traditions, see von Sydow 1948: 12; Dégh & Vázsonyi 1975.
10. This is improbable because each successive adaptation would be based on the preceding model. A succession of significant changes would imply the tradition was not immediately suitable to the new cultural environment, and therefore its rapid spread would not be connected with a *common* meaningfulness or value across the succession of cultures, or be connected with meeting *common* social functions, needs and/or interests across multiple and diverse communities (e.g. in relation to social or ideological changes, such as new models of aristocratic society, conversion to Christianity, industrialization, or to new technologies, such as iron-working, television, the internet). On the contrary, it would imply that the succession was accidental: each transformation would ‘just happen’ to produce something interesting and compelling to the next group that would see it as worth transforming again into something new, and so forth. Although this is

hypothetically possible, evidence does not support this sort of rapid as a common cross-cultural phenomenon.

11. Thus models of mythologies in the Proto-Indo-European or Proto-Uralic linguistic-cultural eras tend to be so highly abstract: they will identify names, figures, rudimentary features of world-models, but only highly abstract motifs, conceptual schemas and relationships rather than fully developed 'narratives' (see e.g. Napolskikh 1989; Watkins 1995).

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The Ghost of Methodologies Past: Untangling Methods, Methodologies, and Methodologists in Black Studies

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Three years ago, a former student approached me on campus to say that he wanted to apologize for how he had behaved in an Introduction to Research Methods course he had taken with me more than ten years before. Not recalling any particularly egregious behavior on his part, I asked what he had done. He said that throughout the term, he had asked "obnoxious questions" and that he had

complained to faculty, to other students, and on the course evaluation form that I had "taught Eurocentric research methods" – instrument construction, experimental design, interviewing – "instead of [the] Afrocentric methods" he had expected. When I asked him to tell me some of the methods he had expected me to teach, he said he did not know, but that outside the class, he had so

frequently heard the term 'African-centered method' that he presumed there were research methods specifically for the study of persons of African descent and that I was concealing them. By now, the student had had exposure to research presentations on a wide range of topics through his work and professional associations; he had also heard recent students distinguishing between method and methodology in the way that I had begun to make explicit on the syllabus for the course.¹ He said he now realized that he had been confused by the use of the term 'method' for what was really methodology.

As my former student spoke, I vaguely recalled that he had indeed asked many questions in each session; however, after years of teaching a course that many students say is challenging, I perceived extreme questioning as the norm in Introduction to Research Methods. Therefore, his confession was not truly surprising, and was not nearly as troubling as what he said next; his presumption about the existence of 'Eurocentric research methods' and 'Afrocentric research methods' had led him to bypass opportunities for in-depth study of social research methods and statistics – decisions he now regretted.

In more than twenty years teaching Introduction to Research Methods (henceforth Research Methods) in Black Studies² and meeting students from various disciplines and universities, I find that most students say they came to Black Studies because they perceived the area to be more receptive to their interests in and commitments to learning about, researching, and being actively involved in issues affecting quality-of-life in Black communities and other communities of color. Although conducting social research will be critical to their achieving their missions, many harbor my former students' perspective on, or other suspicions about, research methods. Students coming from a variety of disciplines often report: *a*) lack of exposure to social science studies that address Black community concerns in ways they perceive as constructive, and *b*) overexposure to studies that address Blacks in pathological or deviant contexts. These experiences leave some students, understandably, questioning whether

they can tame social research methods to make them work in constructive service to their communities. Other students ponder whether their use of traditional research methods in studying community issues will conflict with their work being perceived as culturally 'centered', and/or will perhaps result in others labeling them or their work 'Eurocentric'.

The frequency with which I have encountered the above concerns suggests a need to confront and defuse the usually false assumptions that often underlie students' skepticism about or resistance to mastering traditional methods of social research. Given that confusion between methods and methodology is one source of many students' resistance to studying methods, one purpose of this article is to distinguish between *research methods* and *research methodology*. I also discuss why the purpose of one's research should be the major factor determining the research methods one uses and why researchers therefore need to master multiple methods, and why I believe applied social research is strongest when driven by forces other than the researchers' personal grasp of or interest in the research problem.

Following Bailey (1987), I contend that *research methods* are the techniques, steps or processes that researchers employ in gathering information/data for answering their research question. Experiments, interviews, surveys, questionnaires, document/content analysis and observation are the basic social research methods; one can also combine certain basic methods to create other methods such as those used in historiography and ethnography. One's research *methodology* consists of the underlying network of philosophies, beliefs and values – the worldviews – that shape and inform how the researcher conceptualizes the problem and how and with whom he/she implements the method. Although there is evidence that a number of area studies do not make the method–methodology distinction clear, I situate my method–methodology clarification in the context of Black Studies, where Afrocentricity – a popular methodology that emerged to challenge long-standing culturally biased paradigms – has also blurred the

distinction between method and methodology by use of the term 'Afrocentric method'.

After a brief discussion of the emergence of area studies and how they rightly problematized social research in traditional academic disciplines, I discuss my observations on: *a*) how the context in which students report first learning of social research often negatively affects their perceptions of the ethics of research methods, and *b*) how exposure to erroneous interchange of the terms 'method' and 'methodology' leads some students to distrust and discount traditional research methods. I end with a discussion of what practitioners of culturally centered paradigms such as Afrocentricity can do to promote students' mastery of a full slate of research skills that maximize their professional potential and community contributions.

The Emergence of Area Studies

In the United States, part of the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950s–1960s and the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s is the emergence of academic departments devoted to the study of groups previously excluded from or marginalized in both the curricular content and research initiatives of traditional academic disciplines. Area studies such as Black Studies, Chicano Studies, Women's Studies, Asian Studies, and Gay/Lesbian/Transgendered Studies are all examples of disciplines focused on historically excluded or underrepresented groups – groups that have, within the last four decades, come out of the academic closets and staked claims in institutions of higher education.

Although academic programs devoted to studies of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality often differ significantly in their agendas and philosophies, the groups at the center of these areas share histories of exclusion, exploitative inclusion, and in some cases, overt abuse by traditional research agendas and their resulting theories/models. Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981) and *The Flamingo's Smile* (1987) provide detailed accounts and critiques of research in craniometry, craniology, phrenology, intelligence testing, eugenics and many other

areas that were aimed at establishing intellectual and/or physical hierarchies based on race and/or gender. These measurement-focused researchers almost invariably declared persons of indigenous African descent and women inferior or deviant in some way.

In the classic text *Even the Rat was White*, Robert V. Guthrie (1976) argues that as the social sciences made their bids to be accepted as 'true' sciences, research based on assumptions about racial hierarchies – and more specifically, presumptions about the inferiority of Blacks – shaped these disciplines and their theories in both subtle and overt ways. At the more subtle level, Charles Darwin's 1859 publication of *Origin of Species* (Darwin 1996) influenced the rise of 'survival of the fittest' social theories that considered only those factors internal to the individual in explaining individual differences in social achievement. At a more overt level, Francis Galton's eugenics doctrine, which contended that genes explained most of the variation in individuals' worldly achievements, led to practices ranging from the development of 'intelligence' tests for use in determining which individuals would have access to certain educational opportunities to the state-sponsored sterilization of persons deemed 'unfit' to procreate.³

Gould's (1981) and Guthrie's (1976) presentation of the conjoined histories of racial hierarchies and social science research supports Jürgen Habermas's (1972) contention that 'knowledge' tends to reflect and protect the interests of those who produce it. Given this perspective, the scholars who developed the first programs in race, ethnic, gender and sexuality studies in the US faced a daunting paradox. On one hand, in every social science discipline, the majority of the research regarded as valid academic knowledge had been designed by a predominately privileged white male population that was supported by and thus largely supportive of a social order that presumed Blacks and women inferior. At the same time, the same social research techniques that had produced these claims of Black and female inferiority had also *a*) shaped the content of the texts that students in

racial, ethnic and gender studies programs were expected to consume, and b) comprised a major part of the skills set that many programs expected area studies students to master. Given this paradox, it is not surprising that the scholars who shaped the early curricula in race and gender studies took as their first missions the scathing deconstructive critique of traditional research agendas, their paradigms, and the theories, models, and policies that evolved from them, and secondly the creation and promotion of new paradigms aimed at challenging, replacing, or at least not confirming the belief system of the old order.

Thomas Kuhn (1962), in his now-classic text, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, proposed that scathing critiques of existing paradigms are to be expected:

Confronted with anomaly or with crisis, scientists take a different attitude toward existing paradigms, and the nature of their research changes accordingly. The proliferation of competing articulations, the willingness to try anything, the expression of explicit discontent the recourse to philosophy and to debate over fundamentals – all these are symptoms of a transition from normal to extraordinary research. It is upon their existence more than upon that of revolutions that the notion of normal science depends. (Kuhn 1962: 90, my emphasis.)

Given that area studies evolved due to discontent with the status quo, examples of Kuhn's "expression of explicit discontent" abound in publications in Women's Studies, Chicano Studies, and studies devoted to lesbian, gay, transgendered and bisexual studies.⁴

Methods, Methodology, and Black Studies

Nowhere has the discontent with traditional social science research been more evident than among scholars concerned with the study and wellbeing of persons of African descent. This discontent was laid bare in *The Death of White Sociology* (Ladner 1973), an edited collection of chapters in which prominent and rising social scientists deconstructed prevailing research paradigms and theory in their disciplines. Echoing many of the themes raised in earlier works such *The Miseducation of the Negro* (Woodson 1933) and *The Crisis*

of the Negro Intellectual (Cruse 1967), contributors to Joyce A. Ladner's text directly or indirectly labeled their disciplines racially "colonized" because of the limited nature of the questions researchers explored and the biased theories they produced about Blacks, race, and racial differences. In explaining the emergence of Black sociology as a field of study, editor Ladner wrote:

It [Black sociology] evolved for two reasons: (1) as a reaction to, and revolt against, the biases of 'mainstream' bourgeois, liberal sociology; and (2) as a positive step toward setting forth basic definitions, concepts, and theory building that utilize the experiences and histories of African Americans (Ladner 1973: xix–xx).

In calling for the development of a "Black social science", Ronald W. Walters contended:

there are questions inherent in the black experience [that] have been approached incorrectly by the utilization of both the ideology and the methodology of white social science. (Walters 1973: 206.)

Walters argued that practitioners of Black social science would have to develop "an offensive strategy" in all stages of the research process in order to stave off the longstanding domination "white social science" has held over social research. Similarly, Nathan Hare – the chair of the first U.S.-based Black Studies program established in 1967 at San Francisco State College – wrote:

The Black scholar must develop new and appropriate norms and values, new institutional structures, and in order to be effective in this regard, he must also develop and be guided by a new ideology. Out of this new ideology will evolve new methodology – though in some regards it will subsume and overlap existing norms of scholarly endeavor. (Hare 1973: 197.)

The authors contributing to *The Death of White Sociology* described an academia in which paradigms, theories, and models often overtly hostile to Black interests dominated assigned texts – influencing not only students, but also ultimately worldwide policies and practices toward Blacks. Clearly, this state of

affairs represented a paradigmatic crisis. Over many decades, this same crisis had given rise to ideologies such as Negritude, Pan Africanism, and Black Nationalism – each aimed at the kind of “decolonization” that Blauner & Wellman (1973) say is necessary for social scientists who want their research to be trusted by and be of constructive use to communities of color.

Paradigmatic crises affect not only academic professionals but also affect social science students. Depending upon the nature of the social research that they have encountered prior to entering Research Methods, a considerable percentage of students enter with skepticism about the validity of race-related social research. In the next sections, I discuss how, in my observation, two dynamics – context of exposure to social research and exposure to entangled use of the terms ‘method’ and ‘methodology’ – often account for students’ skepticism.

The Context of Exposure to Social Research and Perceived Ethics and Utility of Social Research Methods

One semester in the 1990s, as I launched the experimental methods module in Introduction to Research Methods, a student questioned my decision to teach experimental design, contending that, among other things, the method had been used to exploit African people. A discussion of this contention ensued among students, with some agreeing, some disagreeing, and others vacillating between

positions. Eventually, I asked those who agreed to explain their claim. As they spoke, I learned that most students usually heard the experimental method mentioned in the context of atrocities – the Nazi ‘experiments’ during the Jewish Holocaust and eugenics-based experiments that resulted in the sterilization of Blacks and others in the south. Some knew about the controversial ‘Violence Initiative’, a proposal by a National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) official to experiment with using biochemical injections as a means of preventing violence among inner-city/Black males (see Breggin 1995; Cohen, n.d.). However, the study about which all my students had heard was the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. In this study, which ran from 1932 to 1974, medical personnel in Tuskegee Alabama, under the guise of treatment, gave placebos – useless pills – to nearly 300 syphilis-infected and non-infected African American men in order to study the effects of untreated syphilis on the human body. Even after the discovery of penicillin as an effective treatment for syphilis, the medical research team withheld treatment from the men. Many of the men succumbed to the crippling ravages of syphilis; many also unknowingly transmitted the disease to spouses/sex partners and to children born of those relationships.

As egregious as the facts of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment are, many students ‘recalled’ the facts as being even worse in that they erroneously thought that the Tuskegee researchers had injected the participants with

Table 1: Summative Responses of Introduction to Research Methods Students (N=40) to the assignment, “Briefly describe the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.”

Summative correct response	Summative “Injection Theory” response	Summative ambiguous response	Summative “Don’t know/Not sure” response
Medical researchers withheld medical treatment from African American men who had syphilis so that researchers could study the effects of the untreated disease on the human body.	Doctors injected African American men with syphilis so they could study the effects of the disease on the human body.	In order to study the effects of untreated syphilis, doctors recruited African American men and did not give them medication.	I’m not sure of the details, but the study had negative effects on Blacks.
n=8; 20%	n=20; 50%	n=8; 20%	n=4; 10%

syphilis. Several years after this class discussion, I began launching the experimental research module by giving the following assignment: “Briefly summarize the Tuskegee syphilis experiment.” Table 1 shows the summative responses of forty students in 2008.

Although 50% of these students of the 2008 course falsely ‘recalled’ that the researchers in the Tuskegee syphilis experiment injected Black men with syphilis, the percentage of students holding that belief has been as high as 75% in some classes. In the minimum twelve times that I have given the assignment, the percentage of students endorsing the ‘Injection Theory’ has never been lower than 50%. On one hand, this high rate of endorsement of the ‘Injection Theory’ suggests that many students forgot or never learned the actual details of the Tuskegee syphilis study. However, at a more important level, the fact that at least half the students erroneously ‘recall’ that the medical researchers injected the men with syphilis suggests that half of the students do not perceive the medical/research profession to be above committing this kind of egregious act – at least toward African Americans.

A search of recent social science databases will reveal numerous examples of constructive social research with persons of African descent as subjects. However, in a classic example of the primacy effect, the fact that many persons were first introduced to social research through discussion of exploitative studies has created in many individuals attitudes ranging from skepticism to profound distrust of medical researchers and perhaps of other types of researchers as well. Phillip J. Bowman (1991), Norma L. Roberson (1994), V.L. Shavers, C.F. Lynch & L.F. Burmeister (2002), Susan E. Mason (2005), and Peter Edmund Millet (2010) are among numerous researchers who report low rates of voluntary participation among African Americans in clinical trials for new medicines or medical procedures. These researchers concur that distrust for medical researchers is a major reason for these low participation rates, and that a major factor prompting that distrust is having learned of

the Tuskegee Syphilis experiment or similar studies.

The fact that egregious programs such as Tuskegee, that the eugenics-linked sterilization of African Americans and the poor in the South, and that numerous Nazi atrocities were conducted under the label ‘experiment’ leads some novice research students to believe that there is something inherently sinister or rogue about the experimental method. In my observation, this belief leads some to distrust the method, the data it produces, and even the statistical procedures used in analyzing the data. Beyond the Tuskegee study, the second most familiar study to students entering Research Methods is the statistics-based Moynihan Report (Moynihan 1965) in which, largely due to family structural dynamics and poverty, Senator Daniel Moynihan referred to Black American families as ensnared by “a tangle of pathology”. The distrust of statistics tends to be most intense among those students who have learned that the same data Moynihan used to draw his “tangle of pathology” conclusions about Black families is the same data that Robert B. Hill (1972) used to draw his conclusions that Black families tend to show five persistent and critical strengths.

It is especially difficult to dispel students’ misperceptions that there are inherently rogue methods or analytic processes when the critiques they repeatedly hear against unethical or racially biased studies are wrongly couched in terms of these studies’ methods rather than their methodologies. This difficulty intensifies when students have also heard the term ‘method’ used to describe philosophical orientations. Such is the case with some novice researchers’ understandings of the Afrocentricity framework, which, as it developed its tenets, adopted several descriptive labels – among them, ‘method’. Although now usually referred to as a worldview or paradigm, a search of current social science databases shows that authors across a number of fields refer to their work as using ‘the Afrocentric method’. The next section briefly explains the concept of Afrocentricity and explains how, in my observation, definitional aspects of the term

have blurred understandings of the difference between method and methodology.

“The Proliferation of Competing Articulations, the Expression of Explicit Discontent”: The Emergence of Afrocentricity

In the 1970s, a number of Black Studies programs attained departmental status; during the 1980s and 1990s, some expanded to include graduate studies. In many cases, these status shifts led to debates at various levels about the curricular content, role, and function that these programs would have in academia and the intellectual orientation the programs would take. The concept of Afrocentricity emerged during this time span. *Afrocentricity: A Theory of Social Change* (Asante 1980) was the first major elaboration, followed by *The Afrocentric Idea* (Asante 1987). Describing Afrocentricity as the study of:

ideas, concepts, events, personalities, and political and economic processes from the standpoint of black people as the subjects rather than objects of research. (Asante 2009.)

Molefi Kete Asante contended that Afrocentricity emerged to offer “a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person” (Asante 1991), instead of from the position of Europeans.

To many academics and laypersons laboring under systems that seemed incapable of conceptualizing persons of African descent from any perspective other than the deviant or pathological, the Afrocentric frame of reference represented a standpoint overhaul. The perspective challenged the notion that European norms or standards of fit were appropriate to apply to all people and processes and declared that African processes and traditions should be the standard and comparative norm for issues involving persons of African descent. By extending to African people the consent to perceive African traditions and culture – and by extension, themselves – in a constructive light, Afrocentricity held for many people a populist, ‘people’s paradigm’ appeal. That appeal led some lay and professional persons

not only to embrace the perspective, but also led them to feel free to add their own ideas to it through interpolation – reading between the lines – and/or extrapolation – reading beyond the lines. A search of popular and academic databases will reveal that individuals across a variety of endeavors incorporate the concept of Afrocentricity into their work. Academics from a number of disciplines (sociology, literature, psychology, education, and social work) have employed Afrocentric concepts or what they call ‘the Afrocentric method’ in examining a variety of research issues. These issues include human services (e.g. Schiele 1996; Stewart 2004; Borum 2007; Valandra 2007); health care (e.g. Prather et al. 2006), criminal justice (e.g. Hatcher 2010) and curriculum development (e.g. Gill 1991; Grant 2008). As examples from the lay arena, writers interested in social etiquette and rites of passage programs (e.g. Coles 1999; Bank, Hogue & Liddle 1996) also mention the Afrocentric framework.

Researchers in the social and life sciences usually use the term ‘method’ to refer to the procedures or steps one takes to collect data, and the term ‘methodology’ to refer to a philosophical framework. The appearance of the term ‘the Afrocentric method’ therefore created misunderstandings, especially among novice researchers. The term ‘Afrocentric method’, although used in earlier publications, becomes especially explicit in the chapter “Afrocentricity and the Quest for Methods” (see Conyers 1997), in which Asante asserts the following:

The Afrocentrist seeks to uncover and use codes, paradigms, symbols, motifs, myths and circles of discussion that reinforce the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data. *Such a method* [emphasis mine] appears to go beyond Western history in order to revalorize the African place in the interpretation of Africans, continental and diaspora. (Asante 1997: 72.)

Defining Africalogy as “the Afrocentric study of phenomena”, Asante offers critique of various social research and analytic processes. For example, of ethnomethodology, he says:

The Afrocentric method shares some of the perception of the so called 'ethnomethodology' [...]. But the principal problem with ethnomethodology is its Eurocentric bias. [...] 'Ethno' is derived from 'ethnic' which is derived from Medieval English 'ethnic' and the Late Latin 'ethica,' which means 'heathen.' Since Eurocentric writers did not initially include white people in their conceptualization, one can only speculate that ethnomethodology like ethnomusicology, was meant to study those who were not European. (Asante 1997: 88.)

The ethno-heathen association manifested itself when a student enrolled in Ethnographic Methods balked at using the term 'ethnography' for the interviews, observations, and document analysis required in the class; he said he was concerned about the etymology of 'ethnography'.⁵ We resolved that he could call his project by any name of his choosing as long as he properly carried out the procedures.

With regard to experimental methods, Asante writes:

The nomothetic model of experimental laboratory research, which insists that variable control and manipulation are able to assist in universal laws, is highly questionable. (Asante 1997: 87.)

He argues that descriptive research, in contrast to experimental research, aims to create a more humanistic and peaceful existence:

In some senses this [the aim of descriptive research] is counter to the experimental framework that is based on the logic of war and the market; it [the experimental method] is essentially an imperialistic model. What is the need for the universal idea, the control and manipulation of variables, the predictive ability of researchers? Based on the war games model, the Eurocentric social scientist went to the boards to be able to predict human behavior under adverse circumstances. [...] The Afrocentric method must have a different goal; it must find its reason to be in the humanizing mission. (Asante 1997: 87.)

Given that experiments often aim to predict future behavior, Asante's comment on

prediction-oriented studies is relevant here as well.

Our task is not like that of the Western social scientist who seeks to predict human behavior in order to advance more direct control over nature, but rather to explain human nature as it manifests in the African arena. (Asante 1997: 89.)

Few would rise to endorse or defend the war-mongering experimental method as described above – certainly not in contrast to the allegedly kinder, gentler, more humanistic descriptive methods that are argued as more acceptable for African-centered researchers. Queeneth Mkabela, in advocating use of the Afrocentric paradigm in research with indigenous African populations, endorses this view with her claim that, "to make research culturally meaningful, the qualitative non-material aspect of research is emphasized" (Mkabela 2005: 185).

There are at least three problems with indiscriminately promoting certain methods while summarily dismissing or precluding others. First, not all methods can accomplish all research purposes. Some methods are superior to other methods for addressing certain types of questions. For example, descriptive studies are poor at addressing the 'what if' questions that experiments address well and are also often inadequate for answering the 'why' questions that surveys and interviews address well. As Espen Suenson (this volume) argues, the main reason we conduct scientific research is to persuade. Thus, the strength of any persuasive argument we can construct depends upon whether the data we have collected is appropriate and adequate for supporting the argument we wish to make. For this reason, I believe that one's research question should always determine one's research method. Method-bound researchers – those who know or use only one research method – will be highly limited in the types of questions they can answer and thus will be restricted in the type of problems they can solve. Given that a method can be no more reliable than the skills of the researcher using the method, *all* methods are prone to biases. In fact, descriptive methods may be the most bias-

prone of all methods because the validity of descriptive data depends entirely upon *a*) how perceptive the researcher is in selecting an appropriate methodology by which to conceptualize the problem, and *b*) his/her level of skill in capturing micro and macro details relevant to the problem. A descriptive observer who harbors strong biases for or against his or her subjects will probably submit a final report that lacks validity.

A third problem with indiscriminately promoting the use of some methods over others is that one risks short-sightedly indicting the method for the sins of the methodologist. Specifically, the fact that some researchers may have used a method for one purpose – for example, warmongering – does not bind other researchers to that purpose, and does not prohibit other researchers from using that same method for the opposite purpose – for example, the promotion of peace. Promoting peace is exactly the purpose of experimental studies in which researchers bring together conflicting groups to work on cooperative tasks; their purpose is to determine whether intergroup friendships fomented at Time 1 will prevent or at least lower intergroup conflict and violence at Time 2. Ifat Moaz's (2000) study with Palestinian and Jewish Israeli youths is but one example of numerous ongoing experiment-based studies aimed at promoting peace among rival groups. E.L. Paluck's (2009) experiment examined whether exposing Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis to positive media images of each other lowered conflict between the two groups. Similarly, promoting healing and preventing future violence is the aim of a Rwandan-focused experiment by E. Staub, L.A. Pearlman, A. Gubin & A. Hagengimana (2005). The latter three studies and dozens like them are experiments that have humanizing missions; they have none of the distance and sterility often attributed to the experimental method because distance and sterility are by-products of methodology, not method.

The type of data one collects determines whether one will have to use qualitative or statistical/quantitative analytic techniques, or both, to analyze one's data. With regard to statistics, Asante writes:

The hypothetical-statistical model found in modern Eurocentric methods is interventionist in the research project because it focuses the researchers' biases on both inquiry and analysis. The Afrocentric method suggests cultural and social immersion as opposed to 'scientific distance' as the best approach to understand African phenomena. (Asante 1997: 88.)

Although setting *a priori* hypotheses may indeed lead some researchers to overlook non-hypothesized relationships or even feel pressured to confirm their hypotheses by any means necessary, these faults are in the methodologists; they are not inherent in hypotheses testing. Furthermore, these faults can apply to any type of data – including, and perhaps especially, the descriptive, where reliability of the data is completely dependent upon the will, skill, and ideological orientation of the person(s) collecting and reporting it.

Taken together, Asante's foregoing critique of research methods appears to hold several methods responsible for the sins of the methodologists who used them. In my observation, this type of indictment increases novice researchers' ambivalence about learning methods, for they fear that certain methods will render their work culturally null or even dangerous. Understanding the distinction between methods and methodology should allow novice researchers to accept that it is one's *methodology*, *not one's method*, that gives one's work its cultural orientation and utility. As an example of how methodology influences research, consider that two researchers interested in the same issue – say, the high school dropout rate among adolescent males – may study the issue using the same method, for example, the survey method, and yet may approach the issue from different methodologies. Perhaps one researcher conceptualizes dropouts as individuals who have failed society and the other conceptualizes dropouts as individuals whom society has failed. These two studies, although both using the survey method, will likely have few, if any, survey items in common because they differ in overarching and underlying assumptions – methodology. Along these lines, J. Harris & W.D.

McCollough (1973) argue that the same data set that led to Moynihan's (1965) conclusions that many Black American families were dysfunctional also led to Hill's (1972) declaration that Black families showed admirable strengths. The difference in the outcome/conclusions of the two studies was due to the researchers' use of different analytic methodologies – that is, different ideological frameworks that informed what questions they asked of the data set.

The first class in which I detailed the method–methodology distinction came to the apt conclusion that Afrocentricity was not a research method but a methodology – a philosophy seeking to influence how individuals select, conceptualize, and analyze information. Nevertheless, a search of databases will reveal that researchers from a wide range of disciplines addressing a wide range of topics have not made this method–methodology distinction, or have not made it clearly. Thus, researchers in criminal justice, education, literature, psychology, social work, sociology and many more fields refer to their work as using 'the Afrocentric method'. This misuse leads some novice researchers to assume that employing standard methods of social research will put them at odds with the best interests of their communities or will prevent others from perceiving their work as 'Afrocentric'. Other novice researchers, perhaps feeling intimidated by the rule-intensive nature of some methods, choose to interpret 'Afrocentric method' as meaning that one is allowed a *laissez-faire/carte blanche* approach in which one can present one's personal perspective as social research. Such was the case with a novice researcher who wanted to write about the effects of a certain genre of music lyrics on youths' attitudes. When asked to describe the study's participants and the interview items, the would-be researcher claimed not to need to develop instruments or conduct interviews with youths – that the "Afrocentric method allows researchers to draw conclusions based on personal perspective." The frequency with which I have heard this type of misunderstanding of research processes reveals one of the dangers of interchangeably using the term method for methodology.

These kinds of misunderstandings suggest that part of the challenge for Afrocentricity and other emergent critical methodologies is to develop ways of criticizing problematic traditional methodologies without unfairly smearing the research methods and without indicting or tossing out the empirical checks and balances that improve the reliability, validity, applicability, and utility of social research.

The Role of Culturally Centered Paradigms in the Emancipation of Social Research

Whether any new paradigm can fulfill Kuhn's (1962: 90) mammoth task of signaling the "transition from normal to extraordinary research" depends upon many variables. Those engaged in the business of creating new paradigms that challenge and/or unseat long-seated paradigms must determine the proper proportion of energies to devote to *a)* discrediting the old order, and *b)* building a credible and creditable new order. Applicable here is Hare's cautionary note that the new ideology for Black social sciences will in some ways "overlap existing norms of scholarly endeavor" (Hare 1973: 197). Hare is telling us that if any new methodology is to reach its full potential, then those shaping it must duly determine which existing/traditional norms to dismiss, and which to keep.

Terry Kershaw (1996) proposes that Afrocentric research be guided by several assumptions, the first of which can be highly useful in helping Afrocentrists maximize their probability of generating research that will be useful to their target communities. The Kershaw model's first guiding assumption is that the issues affecting African people are worthy of intellectual pursuit. In my observation and experience, adhering to this assumption demands that researchers *a)* have a valid and viable plan for identifying worthy research issues/problems and *b)* have the empirical skills necessary to examine those issues with the most appropriate methods – the methods that will maximize researchers' probability of being able to offer solutions and resolutions that are worthy of a community's acceptance.

In my observation, when laypersons generate research questions about issues that affect their lives, the questions they generate tend to be more conceptually complex and nuanced than those that academic researchers – especially novice researchers – generate on their own. Community-generated research issues therefore tend to demand a larger skill set than the set required of researchers who generate their research issues on their own. For example, my 2005 Research Methods students, in order to identify their senior research topics, interviewed local residents to ask what they perceived to be the most pressing issues facing their communities. As it turned out, the topics that community residents advised us to study were similar to the topics that previous research groups had selected on their own – for example, the quality of public education, effects of family structure on functioning, causes and effects of crime, consequences of police misconduct, media affecting children, and so on. However, because the residents were living the experiences they wanted us to study, their statements of problems, causes and effects were more nuanced and faceted than my students' self-generated statements.

In order to explore properly the nuances of the problems as the residents presented them, my students would have needed to have command of the full slate of methods all the way from ethnography – that is, in-depth interviewing, long term observing, and analysis of cultural documents – to experimentation, with a heavy reliance upon survey/questionnaire construction, historiography, and content analysis. Statistically, the students would have needed skills ranging from the purely descriptive – as one might use to study residents' concerns about the how neighborhood appearance affects social behavior – to fairly sophisticated inferential statistics. For example, they would need multiple regression and possibly path analysis to answer residents' questions about how companies' patterns of hiring, salary setting, promotion and layoff are related to demographic variables such as race, education level, seniority and the distance and means by which workers travel to work. In contrast, the analytic skills students tended to need when

they generated their own community-related research questions rarely exceeded descriptive statistics and correlations.

Good Method / Bad Method

Simply stated, there are no 'good' or 'bad' methods of research; there are only methods that are appropriate or inappropriate for the research issue under investigation. Unfortunately, this same allowance does not hold for methodologies or methodologists; they can indeed be good and bad. Unlike methods, methodologists are laden with the gift and the baggage of history, values, intent, and purpose. These factors influence the paradigm(s) that researchers choose to use and the paradigms they create. Rather than holding methods responsible for the researchers who select them, we must hold researchers responsible for the methods they select. Therefore, disciplines that aim to produce effective and persuasive researchers must encourage them to master a wide range of research skills. In that way, when they face any important social problem, the students will have at their command a host of appropriate methods from which to choose those that best fit the problem. Even if a researcher does not plan to use particular methods in constructing his or her own work, he or she will likely have occasion to assess or deconstruct research constructed with those methods. Thus, it is best to learn and practice more methods, not fewer.

Individuals who are resistant to studying empirical research methods and/or quantitative methods often use the feminist Audre Lorde's (1984) statement that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" to suggest that empirical methods are "the master's tools" and are thus to be avoided. I contend that empirical – evidence-based – methods belong to no particular culture or class. Further, the most effective way to deconstruct anything – whether that thing is an object or an argument – is to understand first how it was constructed; it is, for example, usually ineffective to try to tear down or deconstruct a statistically constructed argument with qualitative tools and vice versa. Moreover, even if one tears down the old argument/old

order, the new argument/new order built to replace the old must be skillfully constructed in order to neither repeat old-order faults nor generate new faults and fault lines of its own.

All disciplines seeking longevity and legitimacy should encourage a broad slate of research skills in practitioners so that they will have at their command both the construction and deconstruction tools most appropriate for tackling the problem at hand. Those who are building the new order must use construction tools – methods, methodologies, and analytic techniques – that are clear, valid and defensible to others who understand empirical research. If they fail to use clear, valid construction methods in building the new order, no one will have to deconstruct or tear down the new order; it will simply fall down on its own.

Notes

1. When a student whom I had invited to work with me on a study in the 1990s wanted my assurance that I could show, “if the need arose,” that the experimental method evolved in Ancient Egypt, I realized the need to address students’ misunderstandings about the difference between method and methodology. I therefore added to my syllabus a detailed explanation of the differences, and some examples to illustrate those differences.
2. In this document, I use the term ‘Black Studies’ as a generic term for programs or department with curricula devoted to the academic study of persons of African descent and issues related to persons of African descent.
3. When writing, this article (January 2012), media are reporting that North Carolina lawmakers are debating compensation for victims of eugenics-based sterilizations that the state carried out from 1929–1974 – a period that preceded the Tuskegee Syphilis experiment by three years and exceeded it by two years. A detailed report by *The Winston-Salem Journal* and *Journalnow.com* is available at <http://againsttheirwill.journalnow.com>.
4. In Women’s Studies, see e.g. Harding 1987; Collins 1990; Fonow & Cook 1992; Wing 2003; Harding & Norberg 2005; in Chicano Studies, see e.g. Pizarro 1998 & Soldatenko 2009; in Transgender Studies, see e.g. Meezan & Martin 2003.
5. If one follows the etymological process to its logical end and searches the etymology of ‘heathen’, one finds the following in the international edition of the Little & Ives *Complete and Unabridged Webster’s Dictionary and Home Reference Library*: “In the Old Testament, (in pl., translating Heb. *goyyim*) applied to all nations and races other than the Jews, thus those who worship other gods than the God of Israel; 2a. At present – chiefly applied to

believer in, worshipper of, the gods of savage tribes; or to adherent of any religion other than Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Mohammedanism; irreligious person, infidel” (Little & Ives 1958: 609). The same source lists the first meaning of “ethno” as connected with, characteristic of, a race. The second meaning is given as heathen, gentile, contrasted with a Christian or Jewish” (Little & Ives 1958: 436).

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Part II: Constructing Data

Constructing Data: An Introduction

The second section of this collection brings together four investigations of methodological issues connected to collecting and classifying material for research in the humanities, and to the engagement of existing resources of data that have been collected and classified by others. In research, method always has an object to which it is applied. This is variously raw materials/experience which becomes data in analysis, or it is applied to a selected data set. In either case, data is always constructed through research within a methodological arena. The identification, selection or production of material for the object of research is fundamental to any scientific investigation and methodological concerns in this area are of general relevance. Forms of data differ, but all data is inevitably separated from one context and situated in another. The identification of data is inescapably a selective process of identifying that which is *considered* relevant from that which is not (cf. Lotman 1990: 219). This selective process is complemented by qualitative valuation of individual materials and the determination of the volume of material sufficient or necessary for a particular study.

Methodology valuates or determines the methods used in this process, and its modelling system provides a lens through which potential data is perceived. Certain types of information become 'significant' while others are marginalized or remain invisible, unobserved because "from the point of view of the modelling system, [they] are not bearers of meaning, [and] as it were do not exist" (Lotman 1990: 58). To identify is simultaneously to interpret, categorize and ascribe a definition (Lakoff 1986). The collection of folklore or ethnographic data thus produces information that can be equated with knowledge of its object. Even large, collectively produced archives are not neutral representations of cultures and traditions. The

methodology employed constructs the culture or tradition of its object through the very process of collection (Schrire, this volume). Deepening understandings of these processes is not only significant for current fieldwork or the archival resources produced in the wake of Romanticism, but also may by analogy offer insight into selective processes and the deployment of cultural capital in earlier eras, resulting, for example, in the medieval compendium of poetic quotations in Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* (cf. Wanner 2008).

A significant difference between historical investigations through archival materials and present-day ethnographic research is the possibility of producing new data (cf. Suenson, this volume). Whereas the former faces challenges of limited corpora, the latter must produce data commensurate with the research questions or goals. One strategy for producing such data is a mixed method approach, triangulating multiple methods in tandem (cf. Uspenskij, this volume). In "Qualitative Research and the Study of Language Use and Attitudes", Francisco Martínez Ibarra (Towson University) opens the section with a discussion of methods employed in complementary combination, adapting ethnographic strategies for sociolinguistic study. Complementary methods both reinforce one another and multiply the dimensionality of perspectives revealed by the material in qualitative research. For example, questionnaires alone may produce narrow or one-sided data (Schrire, this volume), and even open-question responses may require developing multifaceted data through follow-up interviews in order to construct a fuller contextual frame (cf. Latvala & Laurén, this volume). In this case, foundations for the contextualizing frame are in terms of 'profiling a community'. Qualitative research has played an increasing role in fields ranging

from ethnography to archaeology. Across all of these fields, many of the most fundamental issues related to qualitatively based study remain the same. Martínez Ibarra highlights the potential of complementarity and the potential of adapting methods across disciplines (cf. Lazo-Flores, this volume) to overcome challenges posed by qualitative data.

In ethnographic research, a research project can easily emerge as a unique entirety through realities of data collection in investigations best described in terms of experience. Even the best modern technologies cannot encapsulate such data completely (cf. Fine 1984). The role of the researcher inevitably impacts interactive situations. Although there is no ethnography without editing in data presentation, cutting sections out of time and pasting them into a coherent presentation, this is a process that can only follow on the researcher's role in the interactive production of information itself. One of the most subtle and easily overlooked aspects of such data production is time, and the processes that take place between encounters. Informants have frequently remembered more in a second interview concerning traditions that they no longer actively use, or concerning the events and activities of their youth. Such engagements impact informants, inciting reflection. They stimulate memory as well as awareness and sensitivity to the topic or theme.

In "Dialogic Methodology and the Dialogic Space Created *after* an Interview", Venla Sykäre (University of Helsinki) complements the discussion of the synchronic employment of multiple methods with a discussion of how to capitalize on these diachronic processes and what they may offer a researcher. This contribution offers valuable perspectives on the processes behind the construction of data, and on the significance of methods employed in protracted interaction with informants. The insights offered by Sykäre's discussion are not only relevant for organizing new fieldwork and constructing contexts for understanding data produced through research. They are also relevant for the contextualization of data that is already available, for posing new questions to

archival sources regarding, for example, the processes underlying differences in two interviews during the 19th century (cf. Frog 2010: 67), or regarding the processes behind the potentially protracted development of complex medieval texts (Heimir Pálsson 2010).

Processes of accumulating information, whether through modern fieldwork, archival research, or the mysterious strategies of medieval authors, is only one side of constructing data. The other side is the communication of this information through representation. The data constructed through fieldwork or extracted from archival corpora and artefacts may be a pale reflection of social realities. Communicating such data inevitably requires selection, interpretation, synthesis and translation into a new type of representation. All representation is both selective and accomplished through the lens of methodology (cf. Gardela, this volume). This process may take many forms, from ethnographic and analytical description – often with a few examples or samples translated into the language of a publication (cf. Osborne, this volume) – to text-oriented collections of 'representative examples' or a documentary film that condenses a cultural phenomenon into a one or two hour presentation. The very selection of material is a process of editing for an audience, involving often subtle and complex choices that frequently stand silently behind the product. Even the most critical representation produces a new (i.e. ideal) version of its object, in which ambiguities are foregrounded in discussion, marginalized to footnotes, or remain 'invisible' along with other details. This leads to the normally overlooked reality that resources of primary materials used in most research have been constructed and conditioned by one or more methodologies that are not necessarily compatible with those of the particular investigation.

In "Editing Skaldic Verse and the Problem of Prosimetry", Erin Michelle Goeres (Oxford University) turns precisely to these issues of constructing data resources through the editorial presentation of material. This fluent article connects the decisions and consequences of editorial practice to the

power relations between editor and reader, considering the consequences of the construction of data for the reception of the tradition and the understandings and valuations that follow from it (cf. Peterson-Lewis, this volume). Goeres concentrates on the editing of medieval poetry, which provides a vital example of the significance of methodological arenas to editorial practice, and the consequences of changing methodologies for earlier constructions of data. This contribution ties in with retrospective methods, highlighting the tension between early text-oriented priorities with current context-oriented approaches that earlier editorial methods are not equipped to accommodate. The resulting tension continuously leads to new constructions of the same data from different perspectives, adding information as a process. At the same time, the priority of earlier editions to be comprehensive in scope aligns with more recent priorities in developing contexts for analysis (cf. Bradley, this volume). This has also allowed early editions to historically maintain a central role as compendia and essential reference works within a field rather than leading to their displacement by the new but less extensive editions building on more recent methodologies. However, Goeres anticipates that the potentialities of electronic resources in the digital turn may result in a new era of resource production.

The impacts of methodology on shaping representations of traditions are not limited to academic and popular publications. Methodology shapes processes of collection and documentation, and large, collectively constructed archives play no smaller role in the creation of models of cultures and cultural practices than editors producing selected examples. The role of archival collections in shaping models of culture is particularly apparent when considering pre-modern, medieval and still earlier cultural environments. It is often overlooked that selection, documentation and organization of cultural materials in a 10th century Anglo-Saxon scriptorium could be characterized by a methodological arena as much as the documentation of local tales by a 19th century parish priest or a present-day ethnographic

study of an American television newsroom. In all cases, these processes organize and classify information, reconstituting certain features while marginalizing others. The breadth and magnitude of corpora enabled by technologies today should not distract from the fact that their use is conditioned by the methodologies with which they are wielded.

In “Ethnographic Questionnaires: After Method, after Questions”, Dani Schrire (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) carries discussion to the heart of this matter through the examination of how collection method and its framing methodology constructed folklore and folk-life in the 19th and early 20th century. This article complements Matínez Ibarra’s discussion of mixed methods by highlighting how one-sided questionnaires can be in ethnographic research. It simultaneously anticipates Rebecca M.C. Fisher’s opening discussion in the following section on the role of the researcher’s ideology in posing questions for the construction of data and the broader construction of culture and heritage. Whereas Goeres focuses on the need to scrutinize the methodologies that have informed editing source materials in representation and their compatibility with current research standards and interests, Schrire pushes that scrutiny back to the process of documentation itself, and the degree to which methodology has informed and constructed representation at the level of primary documents of the corpus. As Schrire reveals, complicated structures of power are intertwined with the production of knowledge through the construction of data. Those structures should be considered at the foundation of each new research endeavor.

Together, the papers in *Constructing Data* reveal the degree to which individual researchers level or accentuate differences and similarities in materials, both through conscious choices and strategies as well as unconsciously within the arena of a dominant methodology. They also highlight the degree to which research and its products are continuously situated and resituated in the present. This process is not limited to the past: the history of research effectively demonstrates that the future will bring new approaches, interests and priorities. Current

constructions of data will be challenged and revised in the wake of new dominant methodologies. Consequently, interpretations and valuations on which present constructions are based should not be presumed to be exhaustive. Current research should attempt to take into consideration not only its own present context and the history of research, but also the future of discourses in which it engages, and how the data constructed today will be regarded and valued tomorrow.

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Qualitative Research and the Study of Language Use and Attitudes

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For the present article, I concentrate my attention on the potential of qualitative research when employed in the study of language use and attitudes. John W. Creswell (1998) groups the various approaches to qualitative research into five main traditions: biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. My purpose is to focus on the ethnographic method and draw particular attention to the techniques available to study bilingual communities. Among these, I emphasize three techniques in particular: observation, personal interviews, and written questionnaires. In order to illustrate my explanations, some examples are provided from my ongoing research on the contact between Spanish and the Valencian variety of Catalan –henceforth Valencian – in Elche,¹ Spain.

The Ethnographic Method

Ethnographic description in sociolinguistic research is aimed at documenting and analyzing "specific aspects of the practices of talk as those practices are situated in the society in which they occur" (Erickson 1988: 1081). One of these specific aspects is the way that language practices are perceived by members of the community in which they take place. What are the attitudes towards these linguistic practices? How do speakers

deal with various ways of using language? Or even, how do speakers deal with the existence of two languages in their community? Linguistic practices may refer to particular lexical choices, manners of pronunciation, grammar or even whole languages.

The concept of ethnography seems to be extended when employed in the study of language and bilingual communities. Ethnographies provide us with a convenient instrument in order to:

see how language practices are connected to the very real conditions of people's lives, [...] and] discover how and why language matters to people in their own terms [...] it allows us to explain why people do and think the things they do. (Heller 2008: 250.)²

This is especially significant in the case of the study of attitudes. As mentioned above, attitudes can be directed at all levels of language (e.g. lexical choices). But, they can also be directed towards speakers of a given language, norms of linguistic conduct, the use of languages in specific social domains, or towards the promotion of languages, among other circumstances. It is not surprising that consequently institutions frequently choose one or more languages to be the official language(s) for governmental purposes, with the intention to strengthen the vitality of a

certain language and sometimes ascertain the political objectives of a certain group as well.

Officializing a language can sometimes be a direct indication of the social value that the language has within society, which can eventually preserve that prestige and accelerate standardization. In Paraguay, both Spanish and Guaraní have been official languages of the country since 1992. Although Spanish is still the more widely used language for government and education, particularly in urban contexts, Guaraní's vitality is still strong, especially in rural environments, and no decrease in this vitality is expected (Gynan 2001). In Spain, under Franco's dictatorship, regional languages such as Catalan, Basque or Galician, were perceived as something that could potentially create division among the Spanish people. In the Autonomous Community of Valencia (ACV), where Elche is located, both Valencian and Spanish have received official status since democracy was achieved in Spain with the intention to strengthen the vitality of the minority language, Valencian.

The Study of Language Use and Attitudes

There are a number of techniques available to study the vitality of a particular language, such as Guaraní or Valencian. Traditionally, three main techniques have been employed: observation, personal interviews, and questionnaires. Their selection and implementation depend on the objectives of the investigation. According to Howard Giles & Ellen B. Ryan (1988), available techniques for the study of language use and attitudes can be organized into three methods: analysis of societal treatment of language varieties, direct measurement with interviews or questionnaires, and indirect assessment with the speaker evaluation paradigm. The matched-guise test seems to be the most widespread technique employed within the indirect method. The implementation of these methods and techniques is not exclusive of one another and research on language use and attitudes often utilizes more than one.

Given that my interest is aimed at the qualitative study of language use and attitudes in bilingual communities, in my research I frequently employ techniques from both the

analysis of societal treatment of language varieties method, and the direct measurement method. The techniques, mainly observation, personal interviews, and written questionnaires, are of high significance when creating a community profile of the community under study. This task, profiling a community, appears to be essential when studying language, since we cannot attempt to study the relevance of the social side of language without depicting in detail the social context in which it exists.

In other words, it is crucial to take into consideration not only information about the linguistic practices of a certain community, but also information of a different nature such as the history of the community, its social stratification, its urban organization, its political system, religious practices, and/or most significant cultural aspects. Creating a community profile should be one of the first objectives for any study on language use and attitudes because it provides crucial insights on how the language issue is managed by the members of the community. Below follows a description, as classified by Giles & Ryan (1988), of particularly relevant techniques for the qualitative study of language use and attitudes.

Observation

The analysis of societal treatment of language varieties helps us understand how people in a certain community deal with the existence of two languages in their community. When I initially studied language use and attitudes in Elche, I was able to identify some of the most relevant issues to focus on in later phases (i.e. personal interviews and written questionnaires) by simply observing, that is, by gathering information without contacting any subjects for their opinions, judgments, or reactions.

Strategies that are often included within this method are:

observational, participant-observation, and ethnographic studies; demographic and census analyses; analyses of government and educational language policies, analyses of literature, government and business documents, newspapers, and broadcasting

media; and analyses of prescriptive language books. (Giles & Ryan 1988: 1068.)

Another topic sometimes examined under the title of societal treatment of language is the issue of linguistic landscapes, or the analysis of language use in:

public road signs, advertising billboards, street names, place names, commercial shop signs, and public signs on government buildings. (Landry & Bourhis 1997: 25.)

For example, M. Reh (2004) investigated the linguistic landscape in Lira Town, Uganda. The author was able to identify two principal domains of usage. The local language, Lwo, was primarily used for agricultural purposes and everyday issues, such as warning notices. English, however, was employed for governmental signage, computer services or the health sector. This associates English with modernity as well as social and economic progress, while Lwo is associated with daily, routine activities (Reh 2004: 39).

Among the primary challenges posed by the method of observation is that the researcher ideally needs to spend long periods of time living in the community to be able to identify what issues, if any, are of interest to his or her investigations. Furthermore, access to the diverse sources of information, such as local census records or demographic reports, may be difficult to obtain for the researcher. Two of the most common difficulties are *a*) the possible limited availability of written records, depending on the degree of modernization of local institutions, and *b*) the fact that the researcher is often perceived as an outsider and s/he might not therefore receive full cooperation from members of the community and local institutions. When the researcher is a member of the community under study, the task is obviously facilitated more easily.

Personal Interviews

Other techniques for a qualitative study of language use and attitudes are provided by the direct measurement method. This method essentially finds the researcher interviewing subjects about how they view certain linguistic practices and linguistic issues within their community. For instance, when I

study the language use and attitudes of speakers in Elche, participating subjects express their views, among other issues, regarding their daily use of Valencian and Spanish as well as the importance of both languages to the identity of Elche.

As anticipated above, a great challenge to qualitative research is usually the fact that the interviewer is not perceived as a full member of the community and individuals are often reluctant to participate. In case of personal interviews, this situation is exacerbated. Under these circumstances, instead of trying to compensate for this fact in any way, it is usually best to try to understand what the consequences of being perceived as an outsider are. "We are better off trying to understand how people make sense of us and our activities than trying to pretend that we can disappear" (Heller 2008: 254).

The expression 'observer's paradox' was coined by William Labov (1972: 209) to refer to the fact that awareness of the presence of an observer can influence the production of the participants when studying their linguistic behavior. How truthful is the information that we are collecting? How can we know if the interviewees are just trying to please the researcher? How can we know if the interviewees' responses are any different from their 'actual' linguistic practices or opinions on certain themes? Might they aim to project a given image for themselves and their community?

A controversial issue regarding the use of interviews seems to be the issue of how accurate or truthful the information collected is. Although one should always aim at obtaining the informant's true responses, the constructed and situated nature of knowledge should be kept in mind. It may be true that information of a factual nature, such as age, or sex, exists independently of its expression, that is, separate from any contextual influence. However, other types of knowledge, such as language attitudes, are often the result of a process in which the information provided by the interviewees is characterized and shaped during the interview through the expression of ideas, thoughts, opinions, and feelings (Codó 2008).

The purpose of interviews is to learn about the subjects' point of view and opinions with respect to the specific situation of language contact. Hence, interviews are often conducted in a flexible, unstructured manner in order to gain a holistic understanding of the interviewees' thoughts and feelings (Pickard 2007: 175). Indirect and open-ended questions seem to be the primary strategies, and direct questions are rarely employed. There are two ways of conducting this type of unstructured interviewing: the informal conversational interview and the general interview guide approach (Patton 1987). The selection of one approach or the other depends on the objectives of the investigation. For example, when studying the situation of language contact between Valencian and Spanish in Elche, my objective is normally to elicit information about a specific topic. Therefore, I frequently choose the general interview approach and I prepare a list of topics to be covered at some point during the interviews. The order in which topics are covered is not of great importance to the results, as long as all topics are addressed. The purpose of using such a guide is primarily to ensure that the same basic information is covered during each interview.

A final crucial consideration when conducting interviews is the selection of interviewees. Following Wolfgang Wölck (1976; 2004) I normally concentrate on 'who's who' in the community, rather than on fulfilling specific quotas. Although some scholars (e.g. Labov 2001) consider randomization essential, when I first studied the language issue in Elche, my objective could not have been attained by limiting the selection of informants to a proper random process. A broad range of respondent characteristics were sought so that respondents of every kind and background could be included in the research. Based on information available about the community, I was able to select what could be considered to be typical or to represent ideal elements of the population that were also considered adequate for the particular purpose of studying language use and attitudes in Elche. During the observational phase, common features of research on language use and attitudes such as

age, sex, parents' place of origin, and neighborhood of residence appeared to be of significance. When the selection of interviewees was made, these factors were taken into consideration, together with the mother tongue of the participants.

Written Questionnaires

The design and distribution of questionnaires is also a common procedure within the direct measurement method. The technique allows the investigator to reach great numbers of the population under study through a low-cost effective strategy. However, the use of questionnaires is arguably not the most appropriate way of gathering information in relation to a topic like the study of language use and attitudes in bilingual communities. Among the greatest limitations we find the fact that only literate people can complete questionnaires independently, and this condition may be extremely problematic for those bilingual communities in which formal education is not as accessible to particular sectors of the population.

Despite this limitation, the use of questionnaires may not be problematic provided that the design of the questionnaire takes into consideration participants' needs. For instance, it is sometimes the case that bilingual speakers have a good command of the majority language (e.g. Spanish) both orally and in written, but they only have an oral command of the minority language (e.g. Valencian). In my investigations in Elche, I often encounter participants who express desire to take the questionnaire in Valencian, but because they are not literate in that language, are inclined to request a copy in Spanish. In order to overcome such a difficulty, the design of my questionnaire is primarily close-ended/forced-choice questions rather than open-ended, as for instance in Question A, below.

The use of questions of this type allows participants in my research to take questionnaires in Valencian, since they are just asked a question and then invited to select the answer, from a scale of responses, that best describes their position. In the case of Question A above, participants are asked to mark the response that best fits their

In your opinion and from personal experience, how do you consider the presence and use of Valencian in Elche?

	Very present	Quite present	Enough/somewhat present	Little present	None present
At the doctor's					
In my Neighborhood					
Media					
At work					
At the mall					
Cultural Events					
Local shops					

Question A. Sample of the type of questions employed in the questionnaire. My translation in English from the original questionnaire.

perceptions about the presence and use of Valencian in Elche.

Another common concern about the use of questionnaires focuses on the impossibility of clarifying any of the answers after the questionnaire has been completed. Sometimes if a question is not understood, the respondent may leave it unanswered, provide a random answer, or simply answer inaccurately because s/he did not understand the intent of the question (Anastas 1999: 376). This is another issue directly connected to the design of the questionnaire (i.e. wording of questions and answers, format of the questionnaire, design of the instructions, etc.). In order to minimize the possibility that a question is misunderstood and then jeopardizes the reliability of the data collected, it is essential to test the questionnaire in advance during a probationary period. Similarly, Zoltan Dörnyei (2003) explains that questionnaires should not be longer than four pages and take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. This is likely to improve the reliability of the questionnaire as well, since participants tend to provide random answers if they feel tired or bored when the questionnaire is taking too long.

Once more, a final consideration is the selection of questionnaire-takers. In order to approach potential participants, two major strategies are often employed. First, subjects may be recruited by means of networking.³ Subjects that might have already been approached through a first phase of personal interviews can be asked to contact family members, friends, co-workers or other type of acquaintances, and encourage their potential participation in the study. Some people might

think that by allowing previous interviewees to self-select other people for study, they could artificially skew the final results. However, taking into consideration the research objectives, and based on knowledge about the community, it will be the researcher's ultimate decision whether to include the potential participants in the study or not.

In addition to networking, some subjects may be recruited at different public locations (e.g. parks, bars, local stores) in several areas of the community under study. The most important point for this second strategy is that the researcher selects the locations for recruitment based on the primary needs and objectives of the investigation. For example, when I first approached the study of language use and attitudes in Elche, the neighborhood of residence was found to be a significant element in the investigation. Therefore, when selecting new questionnaire-takers I made sure I included in my search every neighborhood in the city. In sum, exhaustive preparation and testing of the questionnaire, as well as profound evaluation of the potential participants are essential steps for the design of a written questionnaire.

Conclusion

The present article does not intend to be an exhaustive categorization of the available possibilities to study language use and attitudes in bilingual communities. Rather, my intention was to draw attention to the potential of adopting a qualitative approach. For that purpose I focused on the ethnographic method, commonly used within other fields and subfields of inquiry such as

anthropology or folklore studies (see Schrire in this volume). From a sociolinguistic standpoint, I emphasized the application of three specific techniques, whose implementation for language-related research is not exclusive from one another: observation, personal interviews, and written questionnaires. When employed together in my investigations on the contact between Spanish and Valencian in Elche, these techniques have proven to be highly compatible, strengthening the reliability of my data as well as my analysis and final results. There are advantages and challenges concerning the implementation of these techniques in linguistic research, as explained earlier in this paper, but if we are willing to learn from other disciplines, there are potentially more benefits than limitations. Qualitative research in the study of language use and attitudes illustrates the possibilities of interdisciplinary work and may improve our understanding of the dynamics that govern bilingual communities.

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Notes

1. Elche is a multilingual community in which two languages are used regularly: Spanish and the western variety of Catalan (Valencian). The selection of Elche was made primarily because of its location in the southern region of the Autonomous Community of Valencia, Spain, as well as because of the historical and socio-political implications of the linguistic contact in the region.
2. See also Latvala & Laurén (this volume) regarding the analysis of written narratives and how people 'write from below' about their ideas in their own words.
3. Following Goodman (1961), some authors refer to this process as the 'snowball technique'.

Dialogic Methodology and the Dialogic Space Created *after* an Interview

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Carrying out thematic interviews is one of the central methods of producing data in qualitative research and ethnographic fieldwork. Because ethnographic methods are intersubjective, they are normally

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conceptualized on the basis of hermeneutic epistemology today. Within cultural studies, this generally means the moderate Gadamerian hermeneutics.¹ To define the methodological relation between hermeneutic

epistemology and the methods based on human interchange and a process-like, dialectical knowledge production, the concept of dialogic methodology has been applied. Hermeneutic epistemology and dialogic methodology point to the intersubjective and relative nature of research methods and the data produced, and so to the opposite of the positivistic idea of 'objective' research and data; an idea that a non-subjective researcher will be able to gather facts and knowledge that are lying about somewhere, ready to be picked up. The emergence of performance-centered studies in folklore studies and linguistic anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s focused on verbal traditions as communication rather than as texts. Along with the new focus, problems such as the contextualization of data and the researcher's power over data were also discussed (e.g. Briggs 1988; Herzfeld 1985; for an overview, see Briggs & Bauman 1990). In the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, anthropological debates addressed sharply the quality of ethnographic interaction and the following de- and recontextualizations of the data produced (e.g. Crapanzano 1992; Herzfeld 1987; see Vasenkari 1996). Anthropologists found especially problematic the representation of ethnographic field encounters as 'texts' in a final written study. During this anthropological crisis, or the crisis of representation, what was suggested instead was the metaphor of 'dialogue' (Marcus & Fischer 1986). At the end of the 1990s, the sharpest confrontations were over, and adequate but relevant reflections on one's own position in the field, as well as an introduction to methods of fieldwork and analysis on which the conclusions are based, have become an integral part of an ethnographers' research. The advantages and restrictions of qualitative, ethnographic research have become accepted (Alver 1996). Besides the importance of issues related to interviewing for contemporary social sciences, its intersubjectivity and dialogicality have been discussed in Finland in life-history related folkloristic studies (e.g. Aro 1996; Ukkonen 2000). Explicit discussions on how researchers have applied dialogic

methodology in interview-based folkloristic studies are as yet scarce.

In my own ethnographic fieldwork, which I carried out on a living oral poetry tradition in Crete during 1997–2010, conversational methods spanning from thematic interviews to casual conversation became central. These conversations were both challenged and enabled by the cultural difference between the researcher and those researched. Due to my lack of cultural knowledge and competence in the local ways of communication, I came to realize what a crucial role the time *between* the interactions played in developing a mutual understanding on the subject(s) of conversation. I also realized that the first interview-like meeting was often very different from those that followed – I experienced that for most informants, the first meeting was pointedly a performative situation and often highly narrative. Most of my informants were not familiar with interview situations, nor was their normal way of communication a series of logical questions and answers. In my experience in Crete, the dialogic space being created after the first organized meeting, and the possibility to return to the concerns that started taking form during it, was particularly significant. However, I also recognize the same narrativity in my earlier research interviews with Finnish women who are peers (see below). In this paper, my intention is to introduce these two concerns: the narrativity of the first interview meeting and the dialogic spaces between the interactions, and to discuss their significance to dialogic methodology.

Dialogic Methodology

As mentioned above, in their discussion on the crisis of representation in 1986, George Marcus & Michael M.J. Fischer (1986: 68) introduced the metaphor of dialogue to "refer to the practical efforts to present multiple voices within a text, and to encourage reading from diverse perspectives." Already at that time, the metaphor was used to refer to different phenomena, and neither the anthropologists writing on the different aspects of dialogue or dialogicality in the 1980s and the 1990s nor any recent

contributor has given a clear-cut definition of dialogic methodology. Most writers, however, conceptualize the notions of 'dialogue' and 'dialogic' on the basis of hermeneutic epistemology, and dialogic methodology can be seen to govern the application of these hermeneutic principles at all levels of the research process – in the informant-researcher interaction, in the interpretation of the data, as well as in the representation of the written study.² Dialogic methodology therefore does not refer only to the informant–researcher interaction in the field, but guides all the principles and methods with which the researcher works for producing, analyzing and representing data.

The Gadamerian hermeneutics, and correspondingly the principles of dialogic methodology, can also be applied to the research of texts: the dialogue is created between the researcher and existing textual data, and between that data and its co-textual and contextual realm. In fact, a success of recent Finnish folklore research is indeed the creation of dialogic methods for working with archive materials.³ In these contexts, the researcher engages in dialectical exchange (or 'conversation', another metaphor commonly used; e.g. Tarkka 2005; Ruusuvaori et al. 2010) with materials that have already been produced. This is done by holistic immersion and by contextualizing the data within, for example, its historical, social, tradition- and genre-dependent contexts. The process by which the texts were created, as well as its multi-voiced character, is studied. Although there is no face to face contact, by posing alternative questions to the data, the hermeneutic process allows for an understanding how the texts speak, and particularly, to which questions they answer (for a detailed discussion on Gadamerian hermeneutics and on applying it to archive materials, see Mikkola 2009: 45–61).

My own understanding of the principles of dialogic methodology in fieldwork-based research is the following:

- The researcher is recognized as an active subject in the research. The researcher's pre-understanding, relationship to the study, as well as role(s) are important tools for producing data. Only through the

researcher's understanding can the two conceptual worlds – those of the informant(s) and of the researcher – merge. Although the research is thus a process in the researcher's head, the result is not "about the researcher" (Briggs 1988), nor does it "answer the researcher's personal wishes, preferences or pre-understanding" (Mikkola 2009: 51). Scientific research is about the object; the process is directed towards understanding that object.

- The informants are also recognized as historical, cultural, social and personal subjects. Although the impulse for interaction is generated by the researcher, who also has power over the overall process and its outcome, informants have, and rely on, their own pre-understanding, motives, evaluation and ways of speaking. The informants' speech is also inherently dialogic, reflecting the community's speech and that of their close social circle (Bakhtin 1981; see Tapaninen 1996).
- The data is produced in the interaction between the researcher and the informant(s), as well as in relation to contextualizing factors. The production and interpretation of the data go hand in hand.
- The overall research process is a multi-voiced hermeneutic circle, and the researcher's endeavor to understand means the production of ever new dialogues, both for increasing the diversity of perspectives and for reconstructing understandable wholes. The researcher enters in dialogues with old and new informants, with the research data that has already been produced, as well as with the scientific world and all relevant material available to help to contextualize the object.
- The multi-voiced quality, containing the researcher's voice, is presented in the written study, which reflects an overall research process. With the written study, the researcher then engages in dialogue with the reader.

On Interviews and Dialogic Spaces

In long-term ethnographic research, data is normally produced through continuous or repeated contacts and conversations with informants. On these occasions, we are, indeed, "creating the source through folkloristic fieldwork", as Bente Gullveig Alver formulated it in the title of her book

(1996). On the other hand, interviews that take place only once between the researcher and the individual informant, are also widely conducted for several purposes. In my own fieldwork, both methods were employed. Repeated conversations with a small number of people became the central tool for understanding the processes of oral-poetic composition as well as the personal, communicative uses of the tradition. With these people, the conversations spanned from planned sessions for discussing the broad theme of the poetic tradition, to short, detailed inquiries concerning a particular matter that I had encountered. They also extended to casual conversation on a wide range of topics. The image of variation in the tradition and the local and personal forms of performance, however, became understandable only by drawing on a larger body of material. This data, concerning individuals' own experiences and their perceptions of the local cultural past and present, was created either through pre-arranged interviews during field trips to other areas, or by picking up the theme with passing acquaintances in short exchanges. Because the availability of written information about this still living tradition was very limited, even a lot of the 'facts' concerning, for example, the conventions of musical performance could only be constructed by memorized and narrated oral history.

In intercultural research, it might be self-evident that to form a dialogue with the interviewee, repeated interaction is needed. Even if we share the same language and culture, the conceptual world behind the question and the answer – the person making the question and the one answering – might be very different. Alver (1996) takes the example of a doctor interviewing a patient on the latter's experiences: in addition to the terms used, the doctor's conceptual world regarding the very state of sickness might differ considerably from that of the patient. We normally take up a qualitative, ethnographic form of study because we wish to inquire on a theme, or to relate a phenomenon to its specific context, which is not visible or accessible to us by other means. In research, we need to create those dialogues that do not already exist. This also means that

our informants may have never addressed the theme in discussion – either because the theme is simply not normally discussed, or because it is a self-evident part of one's own everyday life or of the community's life. But how are we to know that the dialogic potentiality of the method (in this case predominantly interviewing) is exhausted, or perhaps at least given adequate consideration in order to rely on it and present further justified data?

To take an example near to our common experience, let me refer to an incident that occurred two years ago during my friend's fieldwork. As a doctoral student at the University of Helsinki in the department of Agricultural studies, Taina Laaksoharju carries out research into children's relationship with nature.⁴ In her fieldwork during the summers of 2008–2010, she observed groups of primary school aged children in a summer gardening camp. She combined observation, participative observation and interviews with various other methods, like drawing tasks at the beginning of and after the camp period. For two months, the children attended the camp daily from Monday to Friday, seeding, planting, weeding and watering the vegetable garden before finally harvesting the crop. In 2009, towards the end of the camp's period, she also arranged interviews with some of the children's parents. One of the reasons for this was to inquire whether anything had changed in the child's behavior in the home environment. During an interview, one mother affirmed that she could not detect any changes. After their conversation, Laaksoharju had given her e-mail address to this mother, in the event that the mother might have something to add later. After a week, she received an e-mail. Overwhelmed by her discovery, the mother now declared that, in fact, the child's behavior had indeed changed considerably, especially when it came to food and eating. The mother explained that her young daughter had now begun, for example, to eat a much wider range of vegetables and to avoid food waste. Since this change had taken place gradually, she had not realized it until the conversation led her to focus on the matter – later, *after* the conversation.

Although dialogic negotiation during an interview may already create a shared understanding of many issues, the time is often too short to adjust one's focus towards *all* the themes introduced. Like in the example referred to above, I often realized in my fieldwork that the first conversation served as an impulse for both parties to think more deeply on the subject(s) presented. Therefore, the interchange nearly always became more distinctly hermeneutic and dialogic after the first interview – if I was able to continue and the informant was sufficiently interested. Some of the reasons for this movement are simultaneously related to why it may not be easy to continue the conversation if there is no natural reason to return to the matter. When Laaksoharju and I discussed the above cited event, she regarded herself extremely lucky that the mother had returned to the discussion later, on her own initiative.

In most cases, the two parties engaged in an interview situation are completely foreign to one another regarding the specific enquiry, or only remotely share in a common frame of reference. Besides their evident differences in opinions, attitudes and knowledge between two parties, the interview is a special kind of performance situation. Negotiations over what kind of communicative rules are applied to the interaction are tightly followed throughout the event, and demand their share of the available energy. The interviewer enters the situation with pre-formulated ideas, questions and hypotheses, which motivate the occasion. The interviewer will not be able to grasp many of the references made by the interviewee due to a lack of the appropriate context within which to situate them. She may also erroneously conceptualize a piece of information on the basis of her previous ideas. I have elsewhere outlined a concrete example from my own fieldwork (Sykärä 2011: 46, 115–116). This lack of context is generally quite obscure and difficult to point out; it is difficult to know what one does not know (and for this reason, however cautious one might be, each study is liable to contain inadequately or erroneously contextualized information).

Sometimes the first formulation of a research idea is insignificant in the larger thematic context of the life of the one(s) researched. I was able to experience this during the interviews which formed my first ethnographic study at the University of Helsinki in 1995, at an early stage of my studies in folklore. I interviewed eight Finnish women who were or had been married to a Greek man, or who had had a longer relationship with one. The interviews were concerned with the learning of local cultural conventions and norms while living in Greece. My idea was that the central folkloristic theme of these interviews would be to discover the family members who taught my interviewees these cultural conventions and norms, and in what kind of interaction this took place. This might have worked better had I done the interviews in Greece and with women who were in the process of experiencing the first stages of their acculturation. However, for the women who had already (or at least for the moment) returned to Finland, the relationship itself presented a major question – whether intercultural or not – as well as the availability or lack of social support and occupational possibilities which concretely affected these women's belonging to the new social and cultural contexts. After responding briefly to my initial questions of how, for example, they learned to behave in church or to spend Easter, all my interviewees ventured much deeper into the social realm of their acculturation process. These conversations pushed me to continue my own research dialogue with the theory of acculturation. In that case, I never returned to my interviewees, although the beginning of a major study concentrating on the acculturation narratives clearly emerged when I analyzed these conversations. (I worked on the interviews in Crete at the same time that I discovered the Cretan poetry tradition and took the path of acculturation myself.) I learned, however, the constitutive lesson that, when approaching them for the first time, my interlocutors may bind the issues that I introduced to their experiences and lives in a very different way than I had anticipated, and that only after their

contributions in our initial interactions could I form the actual research questions.

Even when the researcher has much more experience, the interviewee is rarely used to talking within an interview frame let alone addressing the specific theme. An interview, – even an open-ended, conversational thematic interview – is therefore an event particularly thick with both performative and interpretive aspirations. The first meeting is, however, also very different from any of those that may follow; it is a type of performance closely related to one's expectations, presuppositions and ideas of what the other may ask and wish to hear. In the example of the conversation between Laaksoharju and a mother she interviewed, the interview was situated in the context of the summer camp, where the mother had also been present. Therefore, the mother had simply not considered that their discussion would be related to her daughter's behavior *at home*. Owing to the impact of the interview, she later realized the impact of the summer camp experience on her daughter's behavior at home, but at the time of the interview this connection remained remote.

The Narrativity of the First Meeting

In the first interaction, the narrative form of presentation can be very strongly present. In fieldwork, I have come to see narrativity much as it is described by Jerome Bruner (1990): narrativity is a very basic human way of thinking, understanding and presenting things in logical, causal relations, that is, with a beginning and an end. This means that most people will try to relate complete stories to an ethnographer (or to anyone they sit down and talk with for the first time). They will try to relate them in the way they have understood and organized the series of things in their minds, or in the way they have narrated the stories before, or as the stories have taken shape in the collective memory of the social group to which they belong. These narratives are valuable for understanding communication and for understanding the remarkable moments that have affected the person's life. For folklorists, these are often the very target of the research. They can also complement an analysis of meaning. In my work in Crete, for instance, narratives of

successful casual performance situations, in which a person had improvised poetry, were performed to me particularly during the first interaction. These short narratives highlighted the excellence in extemporization which was otherwise not often focused on in conversations when people talked about their individual relationships to performance and composition. I could, however, experience in other collective situations that these stories of past performances presented a typical local form of narration and performance (and I have therefore analyzed them as performances rather than, for example, reports; see Sykärä 2011: 146–149). Had I met only once with each informant, I could nevertheless have developed mistaken ideas about the recurrence of these (and other) narratives: in communication, they were clearly plentiful when meeting new people or in discussions among groups where not all participants belonged to common close circles. The narrative mode is, among other things, a good aid in uncertain and unfamiliar situations such as during an interview with a stranger; it helps to fill the communication with a familiar repertoire and to prevent the situation from becoming too intimate and embarrassing.

The 'problem' with the extended narrative mode is not the narratives that it produces but the fact that this mode represents a 'completed' reality which may be hard to break in order to change the focus to something else. Narratives are interpretations chiefly born when the series of things occur in a deviating or unexpected manner. They represent those moments that are particularly memorable to the interviewee, and may overshadow other issues that may have been more relevant to the individual's everyday life. The researcher might indeed wish to focus on the informant's less consciously memorized comments and descriptions about his or her everyday life. As the therapeutic uses of narratives (reconstructing one's life through an alternative narrative) suggest, however complete, true and reliable many personal narratives may seem to be, they are always individual and cultural interpretations, and often only one way or a partial way to conceptualize what they describe (see Mattila 2001). For several research purposes, further

discussion can usefully shed more light on the formation of these interpretations. In my fieldwork, I always tried to see my informants several times so that I could enjoy the first narrative meeting in its own right and combine it with more relaxed and reflexive conversations in later encounters.

Nevertheless, another problem that I experienced with regard to the underlined narrative and performative nature of the first interview was that this can make it difficult to continue the interaction if there are no self-evident reasons to have a subsequent meeting. In my perception, the most common reason for this is that the interviewee feels that he/she has made the best effort to tell *everything*, the whole story, and will be disappointed to infer that it was not enough. This is perhaps an unconscious interpretation of the interviewer's proposal to see each other again, but is nevertheless a clear indication that the interviewee is seeking closure. Long interviews focusing on life-history may also grow very confidential and can touch the personal sphere of life in ways of sharing his/her experience that the interviewee is not familiar with. Many people like to talk and the experience that someone is listening so intensively easily makes one overcome conventional boundaries of cautiousness. As easily as it is created, this rapidly-acquired confidence may cause regret or at least reluctance to return to the interaction. When the interlocutor agrees to meet again and return to a topic, many such unconscious and unspoken emotions will be overcome, which means that there must be at least some personal interest in the theme and some empathy towards the interviewer. Agreement for a continuation also means reaching towards the creation of a dialogic space, and the interaction is very different after making this engagement.

One concrete example of this comes to mind: One elderly woman, who composed poems herself and while talking often used these and other poems she had heard, first found my questions of whether a poem was her own composition or heard from someone else (and if heard, when and where) extremely irrelevant, even disturbing – her focus on the performance of a poem was to reflect the

situation. I tried to explain to her that, as I was a stranger, I could not catch the meaning fully without knowing the chain of references carried by the poem. Further, as a researcher who would possibly use these words to explain the tradition to other strangers, I would have to recognize the authorship of a poem when this was known, although for the local people in the traditional context this was not relevant. After some time, she started adding short references to a poem's origin to her recitations (e.g. 'this is mine'; 'this is one I heard'; 'I heard it as a child'). She realized that it was important to me, and that she could take this into consideration without affecting her own speech style.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have argued that, mentally, the first interaction in an interview situation is keenly anchored to narrative conceptualizations as well as to expectations and anticipations concerning the nature and meaning of the event. If the social and cultural background is very similar for both interlocutors, and if both are familiar with long dialogues as a mode of interaction, even the first interview can become truly dialogic. My experience is, however, that in most cases the first interaction will only begin to draw these two parties together to create a dialogue. In particular, it is during the time after the first interview that the most crucial dialogic movement takes place: the immediate performative needs, the emotional stress of talking to a stranger and the pursuit of confirming, appropriate, communicational rules for the interaction become more settled; the understanding of the theme(s) on which to focus become more clear and mutually shared; and there will be more curiosity and willingness on the part of the interviewee to venture towards the specific ideas introduced by the other. In the continuation, the dialogic spaces between the conversations continue to work fruitfully for the dialogue: the information has time to find its right connotations and context, and those details and ideas that do not immediately find their natural context, will pop up and alert one to take up the matter in the next situation. I find that repeated conversations with the same

individuals are a particularly quick way to proceed in a dialogically oriented study. Research arrangements often limit the possibilities for continuing dialogues for very long, but most research projects do not actually need this: repeated discussions effectively show when a theme is adequately handled. The results can then be used in further interviews as a point of departure (or as bases for a questionnaire, rather than starting with a questionnaire and doing interviews at the end). For any interview-based study, even a short revisiting of the dialogic space that is created following the first contact with an interviewee makes a great step towards taking heed of the potentiality of human interaction.

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Notes

1. Gadamer 2004 [1975]; see Vasenkari 1996; Vasenkari & Pekkala 2000; Mikkola 2009: 45–61; see also Suenson, this volume.
2. For detailed discussion, see Vasenkari 1996.
3. With regard to archived Kalevala-meter poetry, see Tarkka 2005; 2012; also Timonen 2000; 2004; on other ethnographically collected data, see Mikkola 2009; on writing collection materials, see Latvala & Laurén, this volume.
4. For an article regarding Taina Laaksoharju's master's thesis, see: Laaksoharju & Rappe 2010; for her ongoing doctoral research, see: Laaksoharju & Rappe 2012a; 2012b.

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Editing Skaldic Verse and the Problem of Prosimetra

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"What wonderful comfort you offer," Boethius exclaims to Lady Philosophy, "with both your arguments and your poetry" (Slavitt 2008: 59). Read and translated widely throughout the medieval period, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* combines prose disputation with lyric versifying. Poetry in this text functions to summarize, advance, or nuance arguments made in the prose, or sometimes just to give a moment of mental respite to the protagonist during a long process of intricate exposition. In the Western tradition, the mixing of prose and verse in a single text may be traced back to classical roots, although the form is also found in the literature of such diverse places as Polynesia, Africa, India, and North America (Harris & Reichl 1997). The sagas of medieval Scandinavia, although composed over half a millennium later and a world away from Boethius' Ostrogothic prison cell, exemplify the prosimetric style made so famous by his work, interspersing long sections of prose narrative with the complex and riddling form of poetry known as skaldic verse. Various included as direct quotations of characters in the sagas, as authenticating footnotes to the events related,¹ or simply to add a complimentary voice to that of the prose author, skaldic stanzas are woven into the very fabric of these prosimetric texts in a polyphonic mixing of voices and genres.²

The relationship between skaldic verse and its prose context is, however, more complex than that found in *The Consolation of Philosophy*, particularly in the case of verse likely composed during the Viking Age. Viking-Age poetry is usually defined as that dating from the late 9th to the middle of the 11th centuries, while the prose narratives in which it is found generally date from the 12th to the 14th centuries. They can be written in manuscripts that are younger still. Although skaldic stanzas are most often quoted singly in the sagas, woven together by blocks of prose, it is thought that many such stanzas once belonged to long sequences of verse which were then broken up and re-used by the later saga authors to create these prosimetric texts (Whaley 2005: 488–489). Although no modern editor of the sagas would excise a skaldic verse from the prose narrative in which it is now found, editors of skaldic verse have frequently removed stanzas from their saga contexts in an attempt to reconstruct the long, poetic sequences that may reflect more truly their Viking-Age provenance. Skaldic verse from the early medieval period thus poses a series of methodological problems to all who encounter it: should skaldic stanzas be divorced from the prose context in which they have been preserved? How important is the later prose context to the history and interpretation of Viking-Age verse? This article will consider the ways in which editors

of skaldic verse have answered such questions and how their editorial decisions affect the presentation of the prosimetric form to their readers. It will argue that, in contrast to early editors of the skaldic corpus, scholars have more recently moved away from projects that excise skaldic stanzas from the prose context, and that such editorial choices have been reflected in literary interpretations of the prosimetric saga. Finally, it will discuss the use of electronic editing in the 21st century to suggest ways in which computer technology may be harnessed more effectively to reflect the complex prosimetric provenance of the skaldic corpus. It will argue throughout that the process of editing medieval texts is an inherently political one, one in which the power of the editor to mould the reader's interpretive experience is often exercised silently but with irrefutable authority. The history of skaldic editing provides not only an illumination of how this power dynamic has changed over time, but also clues as to how it may be further deconstructed in future editing projects.

The Death of Óláfr Tryggvason: A Case-Study in the Use of Prosimetrum

A useful illustration of the tension between prose and verse may be found in the following example, taken from *Heimskringla*, Snorri Sturluson's 13th-century chronicle of the kings of Norway. This excerpt describes the final moments of King Óláfr Tryggvason's last battle, which took place in the year 1000.

Ok var þegar ræða margra manna, at Óláfr konungr myndi steypit hafa af sér brynjunni í kafi ok kafat út undan langskipunum, lagzk síðan til Vinðasnekkjunar ok hefði menn Ástríðar flutt hann til lands. Ok eru þar margar frásagnir um ferðir Óláfs konungs gorrvar síðan af sumum mönnum, en á þessa leið segir Hallfrøðr:

Veitkat hitt, hvárt Heita
hungrdeyfi skalk leyfa
dynsæðinga dauðan
dýrbliks eða þó kvikvan,
alls sannliga segja,
sárr mun gramr at hvöru,
hætt es til hans at fréttu,
hvárt tveggja mér seggir.

En hvernug sem þat hefir verit, þá kom Óláfr konungr Tryggvason aldri síðan til ríkis í Noregi. (Snorri Sturluson 1941–1951 I: 367–368.)

And it straightaway became the talk of many men that King Óláfr must have cast aside his chain-mail coat underwater and swum under the longships, and after that he swam to the Wendish sailing ships and [Queen] Ástríðr's men had carried him to land. And there are many tales made by certain men about the journeys of King Óláfr, and about this Hallfrøðr says:

I don't know whether I should praise the hunger-blunter of battle-gulls of the gleaming shields of the beast of Heiti [i.e., 'warrior'³], dead or still living. All men say both things to me as truth. The king is wounded either way. It is difficult to get intelligence about him.

But however that may be, after that King Óláfr Tryggvason never came again to the kingdom of Norway.

The stanza on its own is a masterful example of the skaldic form, composed in the intricate *dróttkvætt* metre so popular during the Viking Age. The *drótt* was the body of elite warriors who formed the king's bodyguard, and the use of this metre associated with the formal, courtly context emphasizes the political importance of the situation described in this extract. Consisting of two discrete half-stanzas or *helmingar*, the skaldic stanza is syntactically convoluted with a word order that defies instant comprehension. End-rhyme is rarely used; instead, the poet jumbles his words to conform to a complex pattern of stress, alliteration, and internal rhyme (Gade 1995: 1–28). In this stanza, an unusual seven-part, mythological kenning refers to the king and shows the skaldic habit of poetic circumlocution at its most impressive.³ The verse is thus a highly patterned package of language that breaks into the relatively straightforward syntax of the surrounding prose. It is not necessary to read this stanza within the context of the prose saga to appreciate the complexity and artistry of its poetic form.

Identified by Snorri as part of an *erfidrápa* ['funeral poem'] composed shortly after the king's death, the stanza cited here is thought

to be only one of a long sequence in which the king's final battle is described and his loss is mourned. In the context of this poetic sequence, the above verse is a powerful emotional cry on the part of the poet, who has lost the close friend and mentor warmly praised in the stanzas that precede it (see Finnur Jónsson 1912–1915 B_I: 150–157). The surrounding prose breaks up an almost elegiac contrast of past and present constructed in the extended sequence, interrupting the poet's lament with the voices of his compatriots. In the prose saga, the close relationship between king and poet is obscured by the voices of others and, arguably, the emotional resonance of the stanza significantly reduced. Without the prose context, however, we would not be able to guess the name of the poet, of the king, or indeed the context of the poet's anguish.⁴ Conversely, without the stanza, the prose narrative would be more linear, less dialogic. It would lack the polyphonic complexity this stanza adds. We would have only the narrator's assertion that many tales were told about King Óláfr's flight. Citing the stanza in this way, Snorri provides an 'authenticating' footnote to his narrative not only because the skald offers a corroborating voice from the time of the battle, but because the stanza itself stands as an example of one of the many tales told about the king's demise. The skaldic stanza thus leads a double life. At times, it is the remnant of a Viking-Age panegyric, a fragmentary shadow of its former self. Although incomplete, it evokes the grandeur of the public eulogy and stands as a witness to the long, formal poem that was once, at least ostensibly, declaimed by a highly skilled poet in honour of his king. It is also, however, one of many threads woven into the tapestry of a saga. Verse provides a vital moment of dialogue, narration, or authentication without which the saga would be far poorer, the Technicolour of Oz changed to the black and white of Kansas. Should prose or verse therefore be the focus of investigation into such a text?

Skaldic Editing in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Editors of skaldic verse have attempted to provide some answers to this question. As Helen F. Leslie's article in this volume amply

demonstrates, the study of saga manuscripts has enjoyed something of a renaissance in the last decade, but literary scholars have by and large continued to access the skaldic corpus through editions published at the beginning of the 20th century. The editor of such a work is an often invisible, but nevertheless powerful presence in the literary scholar's reading experience. In particular, the way in which an editor presents the relationship between a skaldic stanza and its prosimetric provenance will inevitably affect the scholar's interpretation of that relationship, as well as his or her interpretation of the skaldic text itself. While Leslie discusses how many scholars have been keen to embrace the opportunities offered by electronic editing programmes, modern skaldic studies continue to be heavily influenced by the work of the Icelandic scholar Finnur Jónsson, whose edition of nearly all skaldic verse from the 9th to the 14th centuries, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* (1912–1915), has until very recently remained the authoritative text for the corpus of skaldic verse.⁵ Along with a revised edition by E. A. Kock (1946–1949), Finnur's work has in many ways laid the foundation of 20th-century skaldic studies and his remains a powerful guiding voice in the way most scholars access the skaldic corpus. Comprising four volumes in total, two volumes of *Skjaldedigtning* offer a diplomatic edition of the corpus along with some manuscript variants, while the two volumes most commonly used in modern scholarship provide normalized versions of each stanza accompanied by a prose word order (for stanzas in the more complex metres) and a loose Danish translation. Finnur's response to the methodological questions posed above is clear. Stanzas are presented entirely free from their prose contexts, arranged instead according to author in a roughly chronological format and in long sequences of reconstructed poems. The prose context, it is implied, is superfluous. It is important only insofar as it records contextual information about the poet, subject matter, and date of the stanzas cited.

Finnur's edition, paired with his impressively vast lexicographic apparatus, is emblematic of the text-centred approach to

Old Norse scholarship that dominated the 19th and early 20th centuries. Lee M. Hollander's *Bibliography of Skaldic Studies* (1958: 27–55) records the wealth of scholarly material dating from this time and is witness to the fierce arguments waged over the exact meaning of obscure kennings, the proper use of strictly codified skaldic metres, and the corruptions suffered by many skaldic stanzas through their incorporation into the later prose sagas. In such studies, skaldic stanzas are presented as linguistic puzzles to be solved rather than artistic creations to be read. As Preben Meulengracht Sørensen notes:

the skaldic stanzas have as a rule been treated as texts within the text, and the relationship between the individual stanza and the prose narrative has been ascribed significance only when it could tell us something about the saga author's working methods and the origin of the saga. (Meulengracht Sørensen 2001: 172–173.)

In the corpus edited so ambitiously by Finnur, the prosimetric provenance of the stanzas is subsumed. The helpful editor offers his reader the skaldic sequence in all its former, Viking-Age glory, free from the shackles of the saga in which it was preserved. Although Finnur's edition is unquestionably a work of great scholarship, the presentation of the skaldic corpus in this way implicitly negates the importance of the prose context and presents the reader with the texts of reconstructed poems for which there exist no medieval manuscript witnesses.

The mid-20th century saw a flurry of publications of both editions and translations of skaldic verse that gradually began to invite a more nuanced understanding of the prosimetric form. The first volume of the now standard Íslenzk fornrit series of Icelandic sagas was published in Reykjavík in 1933. The volumes contain excellent editions of the verse contained within each saga text, although Meulengracht Sørensen (2001: 173) notes that even modern editors of the series still insist on treating the prose and poetry separately. Many more publications in the field of skaldic verse followed in Finnur's footsteps in their presentation of the skaldic corpus as a series of long, reconstructed poetic sequences.⁶ However, the work of

literary scholars such as Bjarni Einarsson (1961; 1974) soon demonstrated the importance of investigating the relationship between prose and verse in the sagas, while Bjarne Fidjestøl (1982; see also 1997) interrogated many editorial decisions made by Finnur, particularly in his reconstruction of the longer poems. Three English-language editions from this period demonstrate a marked departure from Finnur's early work: Lee M. Hollander's *The Skalds* (1945), Gabriel Turville-Petre's *Scaldic Poetry* (1976), and Roberta Frank's *Old Norse Court Poetry* (1978) all suggest different ways in which the skaldic corpus might be presented to the reader, stemming directly from the editor-translators' unique reactions to the puzzle of the prosimetric text. Witnessing a wider critical shift away from textual and linguistic reconstruction, these editions instead invite their readers to focus on the artistic qualities of the verse, and on their wider literary contexts. Such editions have profound implications for the ways in which their readers experience the stanzas in the context of the prosimetric sagas.

All three works are, to a greater or lesser extent, textbooks designed to function as introductions to the corpus. If Finnur and Kock's work was symptomatic of the birth of a new discipline in which the corpus was yet to be defined and decoded, these scholars aimed to situate skaldic verse within the wider field of literary studies. Each volume offers a detailed introduction to the metre, rhythm, and poetic diction of skaldic works, focussing not on a comprehensive presentation of complete poems (although some are still given), or indeed of the entire corpus, but upon individual stanzas and their place within the wider literary context. A consideration of the prosimetric nature of the source material naturally forms a part of this project. For Hollander, the mythological background of the stanzas is crucial: he offers summaries of many of the myths related in Snorri Sturluson's compendium called *Edda* (*Snorra Edda* hereafter), noting:

in order to appreciate the narrative-descriptive stanzas following, it is well to have in mind the myths and legends, as familiar to the North in olden times as were,

say, the Biblical stories to the Middle Ages.
(Hollander 1945: 27.)

At times he gives a close translation of the prose text of *Snorra Edda* before citing the poetry it introduces. For verses found within the *Íslendingasögur* ['sagas of Icelanders'] and the *konungasögur* ['sagas of kings'], Hollander mimics the prosimetric construction of the sagas themselves by summarizing the narratives that weave the stanzas together, forcing the reader to locate the stanzas within a prosimetric text. Hollander's work, although not an edition of the verses, reflects most closely the structure of the prosimetric sagas in which he finds his material. The reader is thus invited to consider each stanza as part of a prosimetric text and to use the information given in the prose to help them understand the verse. Hollander presents prose and verse as part of an inextricable whole, and his reader is invited to do likewise.

In contrast to Hollander, Turville-Petre's focus is clearly upon the many poetic devices found within the skaldic corpus; he even refuses to provide the reader with a prose word order so as not to obscure the rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, and syntax of each verse. The citation of long, poetic sequences is rare in his book. Turville-Petre eschews the structure of the reconstructed sequence, so favoured by Finnur and Kock, and invites his reader instead to focus on the minutiae of the poetic moment, one stanza at a time. It is striking, however, that the poetic moment in Turville-Petre's work frequently comprises both a stanza and a prose summary of the circumstances in which that stanza is recited in the saga. This is particularly true in the case of such *Íslendingasögur* heroes such as Egill Skalla-Grímsson, Kormákr Ögmundarson and Gísli Súrsson, characters whose recitation of verse forms a fundamental part of the prose narrative. Their verses summarize, satirize, or challenge events that are described in the prose, and by presenting their stanzas as part of the narrative progression of the saga, Turville-Petre invites his reader to consider the function of skaldic verse in the overall trajectory of the prosimetric work.⁷

Despite their contrasting approaches, both Hollander and Turville-Petre follow Finnur in grouping the stanzas under the name of the skald said to have composed them. Roberta Frank, on the other hand, departs dramatically from this emphasis on the author by ordering the verses according to subject matter which, she notes:

involves some overlapping of categories, but avoids the greater distortion of ordering verses chronologically, or pretending that we have a secure basis on which to attribute dates and authors to most of them" (Frank 1978: 10).

Frank observes that reconstructions of the type found in Finnur's work are "fragile things" (Frank 1978: 10). However, far from locating each stanza within the prosimetric context as does Hollander, she emphasizes even more strongly than Turville-Petre the fragmentary nature of the skaldic corpus and the isolation of each stanza from the next. Although she provides a summary of the prose context for each verse cited, she argues:

each skaldic strophe, brief and intense, portrays a character acting in a single situation in a single significant moment, without reference to its position in a sequence of incidents. [...] Since the individual stanza is treated as a self-sufficient aesthetic entity by medieval saga author, rhetorician, and chronicler alike, I feel free to follow their example. (Frank 1978: 10.)

For Frank, this consideration of medieval saga authors' re-use of skaldic verse leads her to view each stanza as a discrete utterance, divorced not only from its prose context but from its poetic fellows as well. Frank's view of the skaldic stanza and its relationship to the prose saga is thus diametrically opposed to that of Hollander and Turville-Petre, but deviates also from that of Finnur and Kock. Emphasizing the use and re-use of the stanzas by authors of the prose sagas, she rejects the suggestion that one 'true' or 'original' context for any given stanza is possible – or even desirable – to discover. In this way, Frank reinvigorates a far older tradition than that found in Finnur's *Skjaldedigtning*. In the 13th century, Snorri Sturluson wove skaldic

stanzas into the prose text of the *Skáldskaparmál* section of his poetic treatise *Edda*, the earliest extant textbook on skaldic verse (see Faulkes 1998). Frank's volume, like Snorri's, pieces together stanzas by theme rather than by author, date, or source. The prosimetric text in her work is not confined to the medieval saga; it forms the structure of her own, 20th-century reading of the verses. Celebrating the ever-changing nature of the skaldic corpus, her deployment of the skaldic stanzas within a prosimetric framework continues the journey of the skaldic corpus in prosimetric texts both medieval and modern. The reader is invited not only to consider the relationship between the verses and the prose that frames them, but also to interrogate the changing use of the prosimetric form and the function of skaldic verse within that form.

The last two decades of the 20th century saw a return to editions promoting the long poetic sequence as found in Finnur's *Skjaldegtning* and, in the first decade of the 21st century, an ambitious new re-editing project of the entire skaldic corpus was undertaken following the same approach. However, a new editorial mode of self-interrogation has accompanied this return to poetic reconstructive surgery. As Roberta Frank wrote in her retrospective of skaldic studies in 1985:

Skaldicists today are relatively sceptical about their chances of getting anything right; along with the rest of the 20th century, we have discovered human ignorance. (Frank 1985: 157–158.)

Recent editions of skaldic poetry, such as the nine-volume, collaborative series, *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* (Clunies Ross et al. 2007–forthcoming) rarely deviate from the reconstructive model enshrined by Finnur Jónsson a century ago. However, the rationale for following such an approach is regularly discussed and even critiqued by those who practice it.⁸ Reconstruction is now seen as part of the necessary decision-making process undertaken by an editor, not the default mode of presentation. Significantly, a discussion of this decision-making process now forms an important part of the introduction to each such

volume, and the reader is consequently invited to evaluate critically the choices made by both the modern editor and by the compiler of the medieval saga.

It is unsurprising, therefore, that recent scholarship has sought increasingly to investigate the literary effect of the prosimetric saga as a whole, rather than that of the reconstructed poetic sequence. Prose and verse are no longer mined only for information about their separate origins. Heather O'Donoghue (2005), for example, argues that when a verse is cited by a saga author, its pre-saga history is effectively erased and its genesis attributed to the character who speaks it. Leaping over the fraught question of prosimetric origins, she investigates the effects this inclusion of poetry within a prose narrative has on the fictionality and artistry of the text. Torfi H. Tulinius (2001), on the other hand, floats the term “skaldic prose”, suggesting that the complexity of skaldic discourse may have influenced the aesthetics of the saga authors' narratives. Carl Phelpstead (2007) uses Bahktinian theories of hybridity and dialogism to explore the multiplicity of voices that makes the saga a form of “novelistic” discourse. Such studies, innovative literary readings rather than editions or translations, demonstrate the fruitfulness of considering verse and prose as an aesthetic whole. Prosimetrum becomes not a problem to be solved through the compartmentalization of its constituents, but an invitingly complex genre in which the mixing of different forms is key to our understanding of the unique craftsmanship of medieval Scandinavian authors. It is time now to create an edition of the corpus that reflects fully this critical trend.

Skaldic Editing in the Future

Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages is the most comprehensive edition to appear since those of Finnur and Kock. It is now poised to replace them as the main primary text used by literary scholars. Perhaps surprisingly for an edition published in the age of e-texts and wikis, the edition continues to promote the use of a ‘best text’ of each stanza, with significant manuscript variants relegated to the notes that follow. However,

such a large, collaborative project takes time to bring to realization, and the project was conceived before the wide-spread prevalence of such electronic tools. We must now consider how this impressive feat of scholarship may be enhanced by the technological resources that have become available since its inception. Russell Poole's 1993 article on the editing of Egill Skallagrímsson's *Hofuðlausn* provides a helpful model in this respect. In a volume discussing *The Politics of Editing Medieval Texts*, Poole provides two parallel editions of Egill's poem, as well as citations from the prose contexts in which it is now found. In so doing, he posits the idea of a "flexibly fixed text – a text where most passages are to be memorized verbatim but a few are open to variation" (Poole 1993: 96). The oral provenance of Viking-Age skaldic verse may, he suggests, account for the variation we now find in different manuscript redactions of skaldic poetry. The idea of a single 'best text' is suspect because skaldic verse is a form in which variation and mutability is inherent. Each rendition of the poem depends upon the performance context and thus, one might extrapolate, such variability will also affect its later incorporation into the written text of a prosimetric saga. The idea of a "flexibly fixed" skaldic verse challenges the notion that there is a single true or original version of any given skaldic stanza. In so doing, it fundamentally problematizes the best text approach followed in *Skjaldedigting, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*, and indeed almost every other print edition of the skaldic corpus.

This article does not seek to deny the scholarship or usefulness of print editions of skaldic verse, but to suggest ways in which future editions might better take account of the complexity of the texts they invite us to read. Print editions are necessarily constrained by considerations of cost and size, but these problems are alleviated by digital production. It is striking that the collaborative approach of the new Skaldic Project has been facilitated by a website through which the editors have been able to share material and to consult manuscript images and transcriptions. Such a website would provide the ideal

foundation on which to build a fully digitized corpus of skaldic verse in which manuscript variants, differences in syntax, lexis, and orthography, as well as the diverse prose contexts in which the same stanza may be found, are fully explicated and accessible. Such a website could include links not only to manuscript images, but also to the complete prose texts, perhaps in partnership with the publishers of the Íslenzk fornrit series. They could also provide hyperlinks to dictionaries, corpora, and textual apparatuses. A fully digitized, fully searchable edition of the Old Norse poetic corpus – such an inclusive and ambitious project would no doubt see little reason in preserving the overly artificial distinctions between 'eddic' and 'skaldic' forms (see Frank 1985: 159–160) – would be the ideal environment in which to explore the possibilities of the flexibly-fixed text in the widest possible sense. It would allow the user to choose not only whether to read a verse within the context of some or all of the prose frameworks surrounding it, but also which manuscript variants to incorporate, and how many parallel texts to read side-by-side. It would not preclude, however, the option of sorting stanzas in a number of different ways according either to the prosimetric saga(s) in which they were found, or to date, subject, poet, or manuscript, as the user requires. A normalized 'best text' is undoubtedly useful for most literary readings and, should the reader wish to consult it, a fully digitized edition of the corpus would ideally be able to provide this. As Emily Osborne argues elsewhere in this volume, skaldic discourse is complex and often ambiguous. Editions which seek to reduce kennings to referents, poetic syntax to prose word order, and prosimetric polyphony to verse monologue do not do justice to this complexity, nor do they empower readers to investigate it fully.

What would be the implications of such an edition for the power dynamic between editor and reader? It should be noted that Poole's article, cited above, is included in a volume on the *politics* of editing medieval texts; he notes that the variability of skaldic texts may well demand "a politically very different model" to that which assumes the skald's complete authority over the listening or

reading audience, and the fixed nature of the text he or she performs. Indeed, he notes:

to include some admixture of inherent variability in our model of poetic composition, performance, reception, and transmission, as I have been doing, is to detract a little from the skald's sovereign individualism in order to direct attention to the status of skaldic discourse as a social practice. (Poole 1993: 105.)

Just as a power dynamic exists between the skald and his or her audience, so too does an unequal relationship exist between editor and reader, as noted above. Indeed, the authority of the editor is nowhere more evident than in the presentation of a best text and in the reconstruction of long poetic sequences in the case of skaldic verse. It is a move that tells the reader what even the sagas cannot confirm, what Viking-Age skaldic poetry 'truly' looked like. A resource such as that suggested above, however, would remove such power from the editor. In so doing, it would place the burden of the methodological questions posed at the beginning of this paper squarely on the shoulders of the reader. Each reader would be free to choose whether to read the skaldic corpus as a series of reconstructed sequences or as part of the prosimetric sagas. That is, the reader would be able to adopt the methodology most conducive to her or his particular research interests and to tailor the edited corpus accordingly. Why has this approach not yet been attempted? Matthew Driscoll has recently asked a similar question and he suggests:

the failure of the electronic edition ever really to take off is due to a large extent, I have come to believe, to the inability of textual scholars to see, and embrace, the real potential of digital media, as doing so would inevitably involve relinquishing the more-or-less total control textual scholars have wanted to maintain over the way in which 'their' texts are presented. (Driscoll 2010: 104.)

Now, more than ever before, scholars acknowledge and even celebrate the complex, polyphonic nature of the prosimetric saga and of the skaldic verse which forms so integral a part of it. The large-scale, collaborative

efforts that have recently given us such a comprehensive new edition of the skaldic corpus should serve as a model of how productive such exchanges of scholarship can be. Collaboration such as that which produced *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* need not end with the production of a new authoritative edition, however. Collaboration should continue with each new reader who is able to access a digitized, ever-malleable corpus, and to use it in their investigation of different manuscript variants, contexts, and readings. To offer an edition that deconstructs the fixed text and offers the reader choice over the nature of the stanzas she or he can easily access will inevitably challenge the time-honoured relationship between editor and reader. Such a challenge to editorial authority is not, however, a challenge to the scholarship such editions are built upon: meticulous and learned scholarship is even more necessary in the pursuit of such an edition, which would challenge readers and editors alike to grapple with the incredible ambiguity and complexity of the skaldic corpus. Such an edition would be an even greater achievement than those yet accomplished, and an exciting new step in the evolving methodology of skaldic studies.

Notes

1. The terms "authenticating" and "situational" are used by Diana Whaley (1993) to describe the different ways in which skaldic stanzas function within the prose sagas. A similar division is also made by Bjarni Einarsson (1974).
2. Carl Phelpstead's use of Bakhtinian theories of dialogism and polyphony in the *konungasögur* ['sagas of kings'] (2007) will be discussed below.
3. The phrase *hungrdeyfir dynsæðinga dýrbliks Heita* ['the hunger-blunter of battle-gulls of the gleaming shields of the beast of Heiti'] is an unusually complex construction even for skaldic verse. The *hungrdeyfir* ['hunger-blunter'] refers to the warrior who, by killing his opponents, feeds the *dynsæðingr* ['battle-gull'], a reference to the scavenger-birds who would circle a battle hoping to feed on carrion. In this stanza, the warrior is King Óláfr as he fights at sea: *Heiti* is the name of a sea king and the *dýr* ['beast'] of Heiti is thus a ship. *Blik* is a word that describes the gleaming of metal, probably referring to the shields that would have been attached to the king's ship as he rowed to the battle.
4. It is true that even in the context of relatively well-attested events such as those recounted here, the attribution can never be conclusively proven.

However, the majority of modern scholars tend to agree that attributions in the so-called 'historical sagas', such as that cited here, are more likely to be accurate than those preserved in other saga genres (Foote 1984: 74; Jesch 1992: 160).

5. Finnur's companion text, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie* (1894–1902) and his revised edition of Sveinbjörn Egilsson's 1860 *Lexicon Poeticum* (1913–1916) further consolidate his interpretation and presentation of the corpus.
6. For example, Jón Helgason's *Skjaldevers* (1961) offered a short anthology of skaldic poems while Mario Gabrieli's *La poesia scaldica norrena* (1962) gave Italian translations for a similar selection of sequences.
7. This foregrounding of the verse with its surrounding prose seems curiously to anticipate Joseph Harris' suggestion that the eddic poems may have been "internally prosimetric" at the oral stage, and that a written culture was not a necessary prerequisite for prosimetric structure to arise (Harris 1997: 133).
8. In *Viking Poems on War and Peace* (1991), for example, Russell Poole offered the reconstruction of a number of fragmentary skaldic texts whilst discussing the lack of contemporary evidence that makes such a process inevitably problematic; both Richard North in his edition of *The Haustlǫng of Þjóðólfr of Hvinir* (1997) and Diana Whaley in her edition and study of *The Poetry of Arnórr jarlaskáld* (1998) devote substantial portions of their introductions to a discussion of the sources of the poems and the processes of reconstruction followed. The editors of *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* have published extensive records of the editorial decisions on the companion Skaldic Project website: <http://skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au>.

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Ethnographic Questionnaires: After Method, after Questions

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In the history of folklore studies, ethnographic questionnaires played a major role even before the concept of 'folklore' was coined. Dan Ben Amos (1989) mentions the questionnaire of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden from 1630, which can be seen as a prefiguration of later questionnaires. Some begin the history of folkloristic questionnaires in 1807 with the questionnaire of Jacques-Antoine Dalaure, a French scholar in the Académie Celtique who, according to Harry Senn (1981), inspired Jacob Grimm's own work. Nevertheless, sooner or later questionnaires became an essential component of the study of folklore in many countries and contexts – e.g. in the 19th century work of Willhelm Mannhardt across Europe (see: Dundes 1999: 15–19), in the mid-19th century Russian Empire (Knight 1998), in the Atlas of German folklore (Schmoll 2009), in the work of the Irish Folklore Commission (Briody 2007), and so on.¹ Although questionnaires were in use for much of the 20th century, the growth of self-reflection in ethnographic disciplines in general has resulted in their replacement by ethnographic methods, which allow greater

subjectivity to informants and researchers alike.

If we adopt the differentiation between methodologies and methods offered by Sonja Peterson-Lewis in the present volume, then it can be claimed that as a method, questionnaires highlight the methodologies of researchers. Despite the abundance of question-marks that adorn such questionnaires, many of their biases can easily be exposed. Since the shortcomings of ethnographic questionnaires in folklore studies can easily be revealed, they offer an excellent point of departure for anyone interested in folklore methods in general. Evidently *such questionnaires prescribe the knowledge they seek to document*; they are clearly not lenses or procedures that help us to get to know the lore of the folk 'out there'.

In what follows, I will refer briefly to various questionnaires that were used in the study of Jewish folklore, demonstrating the way such questionnaires constructed different 'lores' and different 'folks'. I will then point to some problems that arise from questionnaires by examining a single historical controversy about one of them. I

finally consider broader questions concerning the nature of folkloristic methods.

From a material perspective there is no single definition of what a questionnaire is (or a survey as it is also known); they have appeared in journals asking readers to tell of specific traditions and customs they know about, typically according to specific themes; alternatively, questionnaires were distributed to specific people; in other cases they were used in specific institutions, guiding scholars who ventured to remote places, facilitating their inquiries into the peculiar customs and traditions that they encountered there. Despite their name, many questionnaires are not made up of questions, but rather they offer a certain taxonomy that organizes the collection of data.

While Jewish folklore *per se* was institutionalized by Max Grunwald, who in 1896 sent an ethnographic questionnaire to a number of Jewish newspapers, it is worthwhile to begin with the work of Friedrich S. Krauss, whose work has been discussed by several scholars (Burt 1990; Daxelmüller 1994; Warneken 2001). Krauss was one of the key folklorists in the German-speaking sphere. His folkloristic project was manifested in the journals he edited in the 1890s in Vienna – *Am Urquell* (or: *Der Urquell*). Although Krauss grew up in a Jewish family (in Požega, today in Croatia), his folkloristic enterprise was based on universalistic ideals; that is, Krauss was not interested in harnessing folklore to Jewish (or other) national projects. Instead, Krauss published many articles he received from various parts of Europe and beyond, which he presented in a comparative manner. Among them, numerous articles refereed to certain genres of folklore documented among Jews (e.g. proverbs of Jews from Galizia). Krauss' 'global folklore' was especially well established in his comparative questionnaires (*Umfrage*). Since these were not comprehensive in any way, they directed his readers to restricted cultural domains. Thus, the first published survey related to "secret languages" (*Geheime Sprachweisen*). After explaining the use of such languages and noting that he himself had already collected a number of examples from Germans and

"South-Slavs", Krauss called on his readers to contribute further examples of secret languages. Indeed, many readers responded with answers that were published periodically in the journal volumes. By publishing a number of examples sent by different scholars from various geographical contexts *together*, Krauss de-emphasized the specificity of each case. In this context, when Benjamin Bonyhady from Budapest mentioned a secret language that had been in use sixty years previously in the *Talmud Tora* (religious-Jewish primary school) of his hometown, Bonyhád (published in *Am Urquell* 2 [1892]: 23), folklore of Jews appeared alongside the folklore of many other groups. This served Krauss' agenda of denying Jewish folklore (or for that matter any other regional or national folklore) a place as a *separate* subject-matter that should or could be studied individually.

The first questionnaire in the history of Jewish folklore should be examined with the backdrop of Krauss' many specific *Umfragen*. Jewish folklore was constructed for the first time in a questionnaire-form by Rabbi Dr. Max Grunwald, who established *Das Comité Henry-Jones Loge für jüdische Volkskunde* in Hamburg. Grunwald's questionnaire (*Fragebogen*) was the first step in the establishment of a scholarly enterprise devoted to Jewish folklore.² In the introduction to this questionnaire, modernity was viewed by him as a threat to the individuality of folklore (*Volkstum*). Grunwald's call to collect objects and to answer questions was presented as an attempt to salvage Jewish folklore by collecting *data*. His questionnaire did not include any questions. Instead, Grunwald sketched a map of the newly formed field by introducing categories that Jewish folklore collectors should work with as they collected and sent material back to the folkloristic 'headquarters' in Hamburg. His primary categorization included: 'onomastics and dialect', 'literature', 'belief and legend', 'tradition and custom', 'augury, magic and folk-medicine', 'house-building and folk-costume'; each of these categories was divided into detailed sub-categories, e.g. the category of 'literature' included children rhymes, songs connected with the annual cycle, wedding-songs, tales,

anecdotes, riddles, epigrams, epigraphs on houses, and so on. Much of the material sent to Grunwald appeared in the first issues of the *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde*, which Grunwald edited almost without interruption until 1929. When his newly formed society for Jewish folklore was better established and his network of scholars stabilized, his editorial orientation changed: instead of relying on 'raw' material that was sent by people who reacted to his questionnaire (in a similar fashion to Krauss' work, with the small and important difference that all such data was marked as Jewish), Grunwald collected complete articles from experts in the various sub-fields that he defined in his original questionnaire.

The differences between Grunwald's engagement with Jewish identity and those of Krauss's universalistic enterprise are manifested in the different ways in which they used questionnaires: while Grunwald addressed Jews by constructing a comprehensive questionnaire that could guide them in their first steps in the world of folklore, Krauss addressed folklore-enthusiasts everywhere, guiding them to new issues and themes that cut-across diverse people from different regions.

Other folkloristic questionnaires that engaged with Jewish folklore were soon established in other places. Many followed Grunwald in their emphasis of scientific categorization, although they offered different criteria and emphases. The closest to Grunwald's taxonomy was the questionnaire of the Jewish section of the Swiss Folklore Society from 1917 (see Guggenheim-Grünberg 1964).

Much more influential than the Swiss folklorists was the group of leading Zionists and Hebrew revivalists that were active in Odessa (Russia) – Alter Druyanow, Haim Nahman Bialik and Yehushua Hanna Ravnitski. They set forth a folkloristic agenda of their own. Although different in content, their questionnaire of 1914 was formulated in a similar way to that of Grunwald's in its emphasis on genres and its lack of question-marks.³ As in Grunwald's case (in the first volumes of the *Mitteilungen*) the Hebrew questionnaire was a chain in the process of

publication (in volumes titled *Reshumot*). Here again the actual publication was hardly connected to raw material sent to the editors according to the questionnaire. The main reason for that was the extremely selective agenda of the Hebrew editors, who could not follow their own program for documenting Jewish folk-life in all its manifestations. The Hebrew revivalist choice meant that raw material in vernacular Jewish languages such as Yiddish or Ladino had to be filtered and translated (typically into extremely poetic Hebrew) to meet their over-arching political purpose. This stands in sharp contrast to the most important questionnaire of the inter-war period, the one formulated by the Yiddish Institute of Science (YIVO, founded in Vilnius in 1925), which, as in the case of the questionnaires by Grunwald, the Swiss Folklore Society and the Hebraists, was also concerned with genres. This questionnaire addressed collectors across what I.N. Gottesman called (2003) "the Yiddish Nation". YIVO's folkloristic work constructed a folkloristic depository that was based on data sent by enthusiastic collectors whose main knowledge of what folklore might be was based on the questionnaire itself. YIVO's ideology emphasized the vitality of the Yiddish vernacular and so the collection of every piece of *data* fulfilled their goals. For them, the questionnaire was particularly fruitful, as *Zamlers* ['collectors'] all around the Yiddish speaking world could send in folkloristic material that was then stored in YIVO's archives in Vilnius until the Nazi occupation of the city. (Parts of these archives were later transferred to New York.)

One can meticulously point to the different categories established by Grunwald, the Swiss initiative, the Hebraists of Odessa and the Yiddishists of YIVO. Clearly, ideological differences concerning Jewish modernity are reflected in such categorizations. Despite such important differences, it is important to note that they all shared the logic of following *scientific* categories.

In contrast to such folkloristic efforts, the most extraordinary questionnaire to be conceived in the context of Jewish folklore was undoubtedly Sh. Ansky's "Jewish Ethnographic Program" which was the focus

of a recently published book-length study (Deutsch 2011). The “Program” was comprised of a whole volume that related to the Jewish life-cycle – from birth-rites to death-rites. It included 2,087 questions that were written by the members of the ethnographic expedition that Ansky led to the Jewish towns of Podolya and Vohlyna in the Pale of Settlement of the Russian Empire between 1912 and 1914.⁴ It was eventually compiled by Ansky and the well-known Russian anthropologist, Lev Shternberg, with the intention of distributing it throughout the Pale. Many of the questions were formulated as ‘yes’/‘no’ questions or referred to very specific phenomena, which did not leave much room for imagination: e.g. “Is there a belief that eating ‘nut-twins’ leads to the birth of twins?”; “What is said when a child yawns?”. Indeed as Nathaniel Deutsch notes, the Program “is one of the most detailed and revealing portraits of Jewish personhood in Eastern Europe that we possess from the early twentieth century” (Deutsch 2011: 72). With the outbreak of the war, it was never distributed and its questions remained unanswered, yet since its compilation paralleled the expedition, many of the questions guided its work, and the outcomes of the expedition cannot be separated from the long process of its composition.

It is important to note that whereas the taxonomy of the previous questionnaires echoed different views of the *science* of folklore by relating to genres or types of folklore, Ansky’s questions *prima facie* followed the logic of Jewish life *per se*; his categorization did not necessitate much folkloristic knowledge, but rather an intimate knowledge of Jewish life. Notably, Ansky’s questions related to customs by mixing genres to the point that scientific categories and genres were blurred.

Before we go any further, it may be fruitful to pause and reflect on the aforementioned questionnaires. So far, I have referred briefly to six different questionnaires:

- Krauss
- Grunwald and the Hamburg Society
- The Jewish section of the SGV
- The Hebrew revivalists of Odessa

- The Yiddishists of YIVO in Vilnius
- Ansky’s expedition

We may think of these questionnaires as a folkloristic method that ran out of scientific prestige, yet what do we mean when we consider them a method? Is it a kind of method that enables us to arrive at a certain truth that is out there? If it is so, should we expect to find a ‘good’ method and a ‘bad’ one? At least this is what we typically imply when we relate to methods – the former would arrive at better ‘results’ than the latter. In other words, a good folkloristic survey would help us in representing the folklore we are after. However, despite the brevity of my presentation of some examples of questionnaires in the area of Jewish folklore, evidently it is very hard to relate to them as methods in such a manner. Following John Law’s radical critique of methods in social science (and in science in general) it is clear that the “in-thereness” of folkloristic procedure is connected to the “out-thereness” of Jewish folklore (Law 2004). It seems quite obvious that the type of Jewish folklore documented by Grunwald or Ansky did not precede their own activities. We may consider some questions as biased or criticize the shortcomings of each of the taxonomies, but this direction hardly advances our understanding of method. I would like to argue that once we examine such questionnaires in relation to the *material procedure* that involves them, it becomes clear that they shape what they document. We can follow Ansky’s expedition to ‘the field’ as they visited small towns in the fringe of the Russian Empire, asking some informants about nuts and twins, writing the answers in a notebook and finally returning to Petersburg claiming to have found ‘Jewish folklore’. We can be sure that this specific Jewish folklore that Ansky ‘found’ was to a great extent also *made* by his own questions, just as much as the folklore ‘discovered’ by Grunwald or by the YIVO folklorists was a product of their respective questionnaires and the material procedures that were connected to them. Indeed, according to Law:

The argument is no longer that methods *discover* and depict realities. Instead, it is

that they participate in the *enactment* of those realities. It is also that method is not just a more or less complicated set of procedures or rules, but rather a bundled hinterland. This stretches through skills, instruments and statements (in-here enactments of previous methods) through the out-there realities so described, into a ramifying and indefinite set of relations, places and assumptions that disappear from view. (Law 2004: 45, original emphasis.)

It is important to note that this argument concerning method that I follow, which in itself is based on numerous works and insights drawn from scholars in Science and Technology Studies (STS), does not deny a sense of reality.⁵ That is, I am not trying to claim that Jewish folklore is made up in the *minds* of a Grunwald or an Ansky. Rather, my argument is that their questionnaires take part in the realities they describe. A folkloristic method, as it is understood here, is bundled with different realities, which one typically (and wrongly, I think) views separately – the lore of the folk(lorists) and the lore of the (Jewish) folk:

Method always works not simply by detecting but also by amplifying a reality. The absent hinterlands of the real are re-crafted – and then they are there, patterned and patterning, resonating for the next enactment of the real. (Law 2004: 116, original emphasis.)

Such a claim can be better understood by examining one last questionnaire from the history of Jewish folklore. In this case, controversies concerning the realities that questionnaires partake in are clearly visible.

Bernhard Heller was an important folklorist active in Europe in the 1920s–1930s. As a student in the rabbinical seminary of Budapest (adjunct to the university), he was a scholar of Jewish Studies and Oriental Studies (notably, he studied under one of the most important Orientalists of his day, Ignaz Goldziher). His folkloristic passion, which was related to his teachers' influence, is manifested in his participation in one of the better known works of comparative folkloristics, the *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*, which was edited by Johannes Bolte and Jiří

Polívka.⁶ It was this reputation of Heller's that may explain why he was approached by the Palestine Historical and Ethnographical Society (PHES), who asked him to contribute an article on the study of Jewish folklore. His programmatic essay, "The Duties of Jewish Folklore and Ethnography in General and in the Holy Land Specifically" was published in this society's journal in Hebrew in 1930. In it, Heller tried to transfer folkloristic methods from Europe to Palestine, translating territorial notions that were common in Europe, making them available to folklorists in Palestine. The article consisted of a comprehensive questionnaire which was explicitly based on a draft of a questionnaire that was composed as part of the *Atlas der deutschen Volkskunde* (provided to Heller by his friend Bolte). Thus, some of the detailed questions in Heller's questionnaire related to the house's furniture, jewelry, clothes, crafts and so forth, topics that at the time did not take a central place in the study of Jewish folklore. Indeed, this questionnaire was not seen favourably by some folklorists: Shlomo Shapira, a folklorist in these circles, wrote the Society a letter in which he criticized Heller's work: "the classification of the author is not suitable for a Jewish questionnaire as our folk's creativity is spiritual and not material".⁷ Instead, Shapira suggested using Ansky's questionnaire, adapting it with the aid of the YIVO questionnaire and the one Grunwald had composed many years before. Evidently, Shapira was particularly influenced by Ansky's work, which shared the same view of the spiritual essence of the Jewish folk.⁸

This specific controversy on what one typically considers a folkloristic method is important for our present discussion because it makes the connection between *in-there* realities and *out-there* realities manifest: what was Shapira criticizing? Was Heller to blame for not using a method correctly? Alternatively, was Shapira to blame for misunderstanding the role of the ethnographic questionnaire? Was it a controversy on the nature of Jewish folklore? I think one can safely claim that Heller and Shapira referred to very different 'realities'. The source of the controversy in this case was not methodological (in the way one typically

understands method – that is, as a way to bring us to a certain truth). Heller simply did not view the Jewish folk in the same way Shapira did. For Heller, the type of furniture one used in day-to-day life was part of Jewish folk-culture; his questionnaire helped him construct the reality he was interested in. With his questionnaire, Heller attempted to make some realities present, but at the same time, as Shapira was quick to grasp, Heller enacted absent realities – notably his emphasis on furniture – and provincialized spiritual realities that, for Shapira, were crucial in a discussion of Jewish folklore. As many scholars who focused on the history of our field show there are various meta-narratives that underlie the way our subject-matter has been constructed: devolutionary or evolutionary assumptions (Dundes 1969; Wilson 1976), a commitment to notions of authenticity (Bendix 1997) and the preference of certain voices over others (Bauman & Briggs 2003). All of these discussions demonstrate the commitment of folklore scholarship to a metaphysical model of singularity: in the present case, the idea that there is *one true* version of a Jewish folk and that ‘Jewish folklore’ marks a *single reality*, an idea that must have been assumed by Heller and Shapira. Importantly, the controversy we are confronted with here does not concern with the way to arrive at this singular reality. By relating to the multiple realities that Heller and Shapira sought after, I do not want to suggest that their realities are set apart like two islands that do not share their respective relative worlds. This is a point that is emphasized by Law:

If we attend to practice we tend to discover multiplicity [...] We discover multiplicity, *but not pluralism*. [...] It does not imply that reality is fragmented. Instead it implies that the different realities *overlap and interfere with one another*. (Law 2004: 61.)

As Law shows, the insistence on singularity is taken for granted in Euro-American metaphysics. Since I live in Jerusalem, I would question such a stable geographical marking, but with this reservation in mind, we should think of metaphysical assumptions when we discuss methods. When it comes to

folkloristic practices, we should (also) investigate *what we do* and *how we do it* in relation to Euro-American metaphysics. What kind of metaphysical assumptions do we have when we think of folkloristic methods? Again, I am not referring here to ‘biases’ (national, racial, gender or others) that ‘distort’ our quest for reality, but rather I would like to scrutinize reality itself: what do we mean when we think of ‘reality’? More modestly, what do we mean when we think of folklore as a reality? What happens after we ‘clean’ our ‘folkloristic machine’ and get rid of all such distortions; let us say, after we find the ‘best methods’ to help us in our *representations* of folklore, then what? Are we committed to a sense of a folkloric singularity? If we think the answer to such a question is positive, then indeed sound folkloristic methods are our cure and perhaps we should devote much time and space to methodological debates. However, I have (metaphysical) doubts concerning the belief that folklore marks a certain (singular) real phenomenon ‘out there’. If – as I tried to show – what we do as folklorists ‘interferes’ with the realities we describe in our accounts, then I don’t see any reason to assume that reality is singular. A similar approach was recently offered by Charles Briggs (2012), who emphasizes multiple ‘communicable’ models and cartographies that claim to chart cultural forms of production, circulation, and reception. I tried to examine ethnographic questionnaires, a format which used to be considered as a reasonable folkloristic method, because they can help us reflect on this point. I still believe questionnaires can help us in the construction of certain realities, though I have doubts if such realities are *desired*, but in that sense they are not that different from any other ‘novel’ folkloristic method. My purpose here was not to deconstruct them as a reasonable method in folklore studies, but rather to discuss them because they reflect the kind of metaphysical baggage we carry when we think of ‘folkloristic method’ more broadly. John Law’s work on method can help us in our discussions on what we do and can offer a certain perspective on what we *should* do. Law referred to “ontological politics”; instead

of method he suggested what he called “method-assemblage” – “the continuing process of *crafting and enacting necessary boundaries between presence, manifest absence and Otherness*” (Law 2004: 144).

Folklore may help us in crafting worlds we would like to share with others, but at the same time, as chapters in the history of our discipline show, it may make our world unbearable. Thus, when it comes to our choice of folkloristic methods, to our choice of what we should do and how, we must be aware that our choices are between different realities.

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Notes

1. A detailed survey of folklore questionnaires was offered by Fein Reishtein (1968), who considered them a “fieldwork technique”.
2. Grunwald’s scholarly oeuvre was discussed especially in some of the works of Christopher Daxelmüller (see Daxelmüller 2010 and works there cited), as well as by other authors (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1989; Schatz 2004; Staudinger 2010).
3. Even closer to Grunwald’s questionnaire was the one produced by the Jewish folklore section of the Swiss folklore society. This section’s activity was only briefly discussed (Guggenheim-Grünberg 1964).
4. Ansky’s expedition, which included a painter, a musical recorder, and a photographer, was launched in 1912–1913. Ansky himself began as a ‘Narodnik’ and was an active member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in Russia. His work has been discussed by a number of scholars (Roskies 1992; Safran & Zipperstein 2006; Spinner 2010) and his biography was recently published by Safran (2010). As Noy has already noted (1982), the ethnographic questionnaire was composed by Leo Sternberg, one of the fathers of Russian anthropology. Ansky’s questionnaire appeared recently in translation with annotations alongside a detailed account of the context of its composition (Deutsch 2011).
5. This is a claim that is sometimes leveled at STS scholars as it is described by Bruno Latour, perhaps the major spokesperson of Actor-Network-Theory (together with John Law and Michel Callon). In fact, Latour was approached by a friend who asked him if he believed in reality, which Latour answered in a whole book that provides answers to

the kind of reality Latour believes in (Latour 1999). This was also discussed in his later work (Latour 2005).

6. For more about Heller as a folklorist, see Hasan-Rokem (2011).
7. Undated letter: The Israeli Historical Society Archives, IHS/40a.
8. See Ansky’s text on “Jewish Ethnopoetics” which appeared in English with notes and remarks by Bar Itzhak: (Bar-Itzhak 2010).

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Part III: Culturally Sensitive Reading

Culturally Sensitive Reading: An Introduction

The third section of this collection turns from the construction of data to context-oriented approaches to that data. Developing culturally sensitive approaches and examining the relationship between ‘text’ or cultural expression and its context of use has only really found currency since the 1960s and 1970s. Paradigm shifts of that era resounded across disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. As was addressed in *Constructing Data*, this process problematized resources produced by earlier research precisely because attention shifted to developing knowledge that had been ‘invisible’ to research of the preceding era. This process simultaneously generated whole new fields, such as area studies surrounding subjects and groups that had been silenced and unacknowledged in the hegemony of earlier discourse. The revolution of dominant methodologies was not without challenges and crises in engaging these unknowns, especially where fields intersected with politically charged issues in modern societies (cf. Peterson-Lewis, this volume). A thematic core of these challenges was the problem of disentangling perspectives of the hegemony of discourse and its construction of the objects of research for what can be described as ‘culturally sensitive’ approaches. The production of new terms such as *etic* and *emic* (Pike 1954) for distinguishing the (*etic*) externally imposed terminologies, typologies and definitions of those academic discourses from the (*emic*) terminologies, typologies and definitions of the living social environments being investigated and described is symptomatic – as is their rapidly spread across disciplines (e.g. Dundes 1962; see further Headland et al. 1990). The five papers in this section build on Jill Bradley’s discussion of developing contextualized approaches in *Methods in Practice*. They focus precisely on methods and challenges of developing *emic* (and potentially

marginalized) perspectives with concentrated and multifaceted approaches to diverse data (see also Harris 1979).

A central factor in developing culturally sensitive readings is the contextualization of data in analysis. Contexts are not uniform or singular. Frequently, multiple and intersecting contexts of a particular case or phenomenon must be considered (Lazo-Flores, Sykäri, this volume). This may require developing each context across a diversity of data, or each with a different scope (Frog, this volume). Although this presents challenges in the choice and coordination of methods, the successful coordination of methods becomes mutually reinforcing, and complementarity perspectives augment this process by producing additional information, generating a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding of the phenomenon as a whole.

In “The Anglo-Saxon Charms: Texts in Context”, Rebecca M.C. Fisher (University of Sheffield) opens these challenges through a dynamic study and methodological approach oriented precisely to assess numerous intersecting contexts and the interpretations to which these give rise. She engages with the theme of retrospective methods by problematizing early treatments of a medieval corpus, building on Dani Schrire’s discussion of researchers’ ideology-bound construction of traditions and ethnic culture through the construction of data. Whereas Erin Michelle Goeres focuses on the problems of decontextualizing medieval poetry from narrative contexts, Fisher addresses the problem of decontextualizing these texts from manuscript contexts. She reveals the significance of metadata embedded in the context of medieval compilation reflecting medieval editorial practice. She then examines how this context interrelates and overlaps with traditional content at intersections of genre, verbal expression, traditional images and figures, as well as

potential indicators of performative practice (cf. Leslie, this volume). Just as Martínez Ibarra showed the benefits of complementary methods in constructing data, Fisher demonstrates the value of analyzing multiple, overlapping and diverse contexts to develop interpretations as the plurality of perspectives are brought in relation to one another.

The production of medieval texts is connected to processes and strategies for 'remembering' and for communicating memory. Memory is a vital area for a wide range of research in the humanities, from living oral history and architecture to archives of extinct oral poetry and archaeological evidence (see further Radstone 2000). Tradition, by definition, constructs (sometimes imagined) continuity with the past and/or across different groups through the reproduction and repetition of cultural practices. However, only in the past few decades has its relationship to 'memory' itself become subject to investigation.

In "The Sensitive Interpretation of Emotions: Methodological Perspectives on Studying Meanings in Written Life-Historical Narratives", Pauliina Latvala (University of Helsinki) & Kirsi Laurén (University of Eastern Finland) turn from medieval manuscripts to modern written archival texts (cf. Schrire, this volume). They apply sensitive reading to these artefacts of remembering, analyzing text-objects that can be described as representations of memory. The authors participate in the *affective turn*, the shift in critical theory to considerations of affect (see e.g. Ticineto Clough & Halley 2007). Emotions attached to the past – whether in terms of time, place, or both in combination – can be more important for individuals and groups than a past event itself. This connection between remembering and emotions is a neglected area, which requires the development of new methods relevant for and appropriate to investigating the phenomenon in different types of corpora. Approaches to affect intersect with many strategies of sensitive reading for approaching the role and significance of rhetoric in expression, but concentrate on notions of the individual in a cultural context and penetrate a silent textual surface to give close attention to

subtleties of variation within those contextual frames. Latvala & Laurén highlight the consideration that must be given to social and historical circumstances in approaching archived materials and offer perspectives on and approaches to the subtleties within such data relevant to a wide range of research interests.

As highlighted by Bradley, sensitive reading is by no means limited to textual or verbal culture, where corresponding methods are applied in the analysis of visual and material culture. Strategies employed in close reading easily cross between disciplines, and also extend beyond the scope of the humanities. Although much sensitive reading is engaged in developing an interpretation of the research object, in "Design *Poiesis*: An Inquiry on Outcomes in the Use of Method and Methodology", Thelma Lazo-Flores (Ball State University) discusses corresponding strategies for the development of a contextually appropriate and relevant product.

Lazo-Flores reveals design to be a mode of communication, semiotically producing messages and engaging metaphors. She considers production-oriented strategies of mixed method application and how they have been related to the science of the constructed environment. This discussion reopens the theme of relationships between method, theory and practice, looking at their connections to creative, critical, and consequential thinking. Lazo-Flores offers a useful discussion of the relationships and interfaces of methods across diverse disciplines (cf. Martínez Ibarra, this volume) from the perspective of a rapidly evolving discipline. This contribution offers valuable perspectives from a field in which the outcome of an application of method is a product that might be an object of research in another time and place. This counterpoint to Bradley's discussion of 'reading' visual culture advances a sensitive reading for the production of environments engaging social and cultural conceptions of space (cf. Nordvig, this volume). Her succinct presentation of this discipline's relationship to others raises important questions and opens great possibilities for how methods and methodological perspectives from the field of

design can be drawn on for insights in other fields and arenas of application.

Realities of social practices are often method-based realizations in specific cultural and historical circumstances. Retrospective methods are oriented toward accessing those practices and historical backgrounds underlying them on the basis of evidence of their outcomes. Changes in methodology and paradigm shifted emphasis away from the 'reconstruction' of 'original forms' or 'original texts'. In line with other context-oriented concerns and interest in variation, individual realizations were highlighted, whether in the context-specific retelling of an oral folktale or a context-specific recopying of a medieval popular story. Culturally sensitive approaches to these patterns of variation and their significance thereby became a vital area of discussion, and sometimes of debate.

In "Younger Icelandic Manuscripts and Old Norse Studies", Helen F. Leslie (University of Bergen) returns from production in methodological practice to approaching historical practices of method through their products. She offers an introduction to aspects of philological methods and the methodology of New Philology. Leslie opens manuscript transmission as social practice in the changing contexts of historical social realities (cf. Fisher, this volume). When approaching manuscript exemplars that were subject to transcription, transformation and adaptation, she focuses on different retrospective methods and retrospective interpretive goals (cf. Frog, this volume). Leslie considers different social and historical contexts of text production and reproduction, and their various intersections with oral and literary culture. She connects her discussion to the topic of mythology, illustrating the problematics of approaching these text-artefacts for insights into periods predating their production and transmission that gave rise to the written texts as works. She highlights the degree to which the interest and value in individual text-exemplars is dependent on methodology and the questions posed (cf. Suenson, this volume).

Interfaces of oral and literary culture are a vital topic of discussion in both modern and historical contexts. and these different cultural

environments can be reciprocally informative. The type of insights available is, of course, conditioned by the data, and the perspectives offered by Leslie's contribution on the development of oral-written interfaces as a historical process are complementary to those of Latvala & Laurén, where the differing type and distributions of data sets allow different insights. Data in such an investigation may also prove too thin for a straightforward analysis, requiring alternative strategies. Interfaces of oral and written cultures took place as a historical process in similar ways and with similar consequences in a number of cultures in the Middle Ages. Consequently, typological comparison holds potential as one such alternative method for approaching these interfaces.

In "Ferocious Beast (*óarga dýr*) between North and East", Fjodor Uspenskij (Institute of Slavic Studies, Russian Academy of Science Moscow, and Higher School of Economics) turns from manuscript transmission and whole texts to idiomatic phrasing in the lexicon and the transition from oral to written culture. He employs a form of sensitive reading in examining typologically similar lexicalized formulas in two languages. He combines methods for approaching the historical background of a lexicalized formula within each language with complementary typological comparisons across languages where data for each is historically limited. The formulas present another example of potentially controversial cultural knowledge within the transition to Christianity (cf. Osborne, this volume), where evidence of earlier belief traditions could become suspended (cf. Frog, this volume). Like Bradley, Uspenskij emphasizes the close examination of individual cases in an exhaustive data set of examples. He shows how commensurate typological materials from different cultures can prove mutually informative, potentially provide reciprocal insight into both traditions, as well as into more general historical processes in developments from oral to written cultures.

Within the discussions of *Culturally Sensitive Reading*, the anthropocentric nature of cultural phenomena comes to the fore. Knowledge, understandings, the semiotics of

expression and practicalities of physical environments are all revealed to be subject to continuous social negotiation. Cultural, textual and visual representations are repeatedly reconstructed in relation to contexts in which they are re-realized. Perhaps more significantly, their anthropocentric nature implicitly binds them to culture. These discussions illuminate problems addressed in *Constructing Data* by revealing that cultural sensitivity cannot be neglected in modern research: it has become essential to current methodologies. Simply put, all manifestations of cultural expression require culturally sensitive reading.

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The Anglo-Saxon Charms: Texts in Context

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An Anglo-Saxon charm is a written text with a performative element, ranging in length from four or five lines to over a hundred lines long. The majority of Anglo-Saxon charms are intended to remedy medical ailments, but several exist for other purposes (such as solving the theft of livestock). Most of the extant charms are recorded in large collections of medical texts (such as the *Lacnunga* and *Bald's Leechbook*), but a substantial number (around 45 texts) are recorded in manuscripts that also contain religious, legal or miscellaneous material. The corpus of Anglo-Saxon charms is diverse, including texts in Latin and the vernacular that mix verse with prose and make use of a wide range of modes of performance, including acts of speaking, singing and writing. The diversity of these texts presents a challenge to the modern reader, who is separated from these texts by a gulf of a thousand years and vast changes in social, cultural and religious structures. This gap between the charms and the modern reader is

difficult to bridge, and has been tackled using several different approaches, which in themselves have developed over time as scholarly ideologies have changed. It is impossible to discuss the wealth of scholarship on the Anglo-Saxon charms here, therefore only a selection of works representative of the major seismic shifts in the discipline are surveyed below as an overview. I will demonstrate a context-based approach at work, contrasting it with the interpretations presented by two of the best examples of the earliest editions of charms to highlight the advantages of this methodology. The charms to be discussed appear in London, British Library, Royal 2.a.xx, also known as 'The Royal Prayerbook' (s.ix¹).

Review of Scholarship

The earliest editions of the charms, which collected, translated and commented on charms from a number of manuscripts, focused on the categorisation of the charms. Two of the best examples of this period in

charm studies are Felix Grendon's "The Anglo-Saxon Charms" (1909) and Godfrid Storms' *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (1948). Both editors attempted to classify the charms according to their degree of Christianisation, focusing on identifying Christian material in the charms in order that the 'original', 'pagan' charms could be revealed. Grendon and Storms were both operating in a scholarly milieu that was predicated on the basis that it was possible to reconstruct a lost 'original' text from extant texts, and that those 'original' texts represent true, pure pagan beliefs.¹ This approach is problematic because it relies on the association of several formal properties with 'pagan' culture, which are contrasted with the more 'Christian' characteristics of Latin and prose. Vernacular meter and language are seen as indicators of pagan material, whereas Latin and prose are read as indicative of Christianisation. While it is true that many Anglo-Saxon religious texts are written in Latin, it is also true that legal texts (such as charters) are often written in Latin, and texts which relate Christian narratives can be recorded in vernacular prose (such as those poems in the Exeter Book). Thus, Grendon and Storms' binary opposition of 'pagan' and 'Christian' is problematic because it is grounded in their own academic environment, which means that they are categorising the charms in terms of standards not consistent with Anglo-Saxon values. As is discussed by Erin Michelle Goeres elsewhere in this collection, editions frequently excise texts from their original contexts: Grendon and Storms are no different. By removing the charms from their manuscripts and considering them as isolated artefacts, Grendon and Storms obscure the information that allows the modern reader to decode how the charms might have been used and performed, and what their significance to the Anglo-Saxon reader might have been. In order to reconstruct this information, the editors attempt to categorise the charms in terms of criteria that are disconnected from any relevant Anglo-Saxon evidence. By measuring the charms against standards that are not consistent with Anglo-Saxon cultural, social or religious values, Grendon and Storms generate misleading terminology and

categorisations that are removed from – and in most cases directly contravene – the evidence present in the charms' manuscripts.

This search for Anglo-Saxon pagans, led by a scholarly ideology which was centred on the need to discover the origins of charms, persisted well into the 20th century (e.g. Rosenberg 1966; Weston 1995). All of these works share the same central characteristic: they interpret the charms based on their content, within a scholarly ideology predicated on value judgements not located in Anglo-Saxon culture. That is, their discussion of the charms focuses on the imagery and processes contained *within* the charms, supported by external evidence from other cultures and traditions. For example, in his article "The Meaning of *Æcerbot*" (1966), Bruce Rosenberg demonstrated how the Anglo-Saxon field remedy charm shared similarities with texts from ancient cultures across the world. However, the Anglo-Saxon user of the *Æcerbot* would not have had access to, for example, Egyptian and Roman cultural traditions, so any comparisons do not tell us anything about the Anglo-Saxon witness of the charm. Taken collectively, these examples of content-based scholarship provide invaluable commentary on the ways in which the charms operate and how they might have come into being. However, in more recent years a second group of scholarship has emerged. This new movement represents a shift away from content-based discussion to a focus on context, seeking to situate readings of the charms in evidence present in the charms' manuscripts and in other Anglo-Saxon texts. This alternative theoretical standpoint stands on the shoulders of Grendon and Storms' seminal editions of the charms, relying on them for transcriptions and translations in many cases, but allows the interpretation to be generated from the text without interference from the values of the scholar.

For example, in the article "The *Æcerbot* Charm and its Christian User" (1977), Thomas D. Hill moved away from discussing the charm in terms of its roots in times previous to Anglo-Saxon England, and instead focused on how the charm fits into the religious and social conditions present at the

time of the charm's use and recording. Hill thus accorded equal significance to the 'Christian' and 'pagan' parts of the charm, moving away from regarding this charm as an example of a Christianised pagan text.² Hill interpreted the use of the liturgy in the charm as symptomatic of a society in flux, and valuable evidence of the social and cultural changes happening at the time of the charm's use and recording. The key difference between Hill and previous scholars is that the charms are allowed to speak for themselves, telling a story about their own significance to Anglo-Saxon charmers rather than simply standing as a bridge between the scholar and a lost 'original', 'pagan' text. Another critical difference is the awareness of the role terminology plays in interpreting the charms. While Grendon and Storms make use of terms such as 'spell', 'sorcerer' and 'magic', in accordance with their association of the charms with non-Christian, pagan culture, more recent scholars avoid these charged terms in preference for a more neutral approach. For instance, more modern scholars tend to use 'practitioner' or 'performer' rather than 'sorcerer' or 'magician'.

This movement away from a focus on paganism to a more neutral approach comes hand-in-hand with an upsurge in the popularity of referring to the context of charms as well as their content. By exploring what context can reveal about the content of a charm, scholars such as Stephanie Hollis (1997) have been able to uncover information about the performance of charms. For example, Hollis' discussion of a theft charm relates the content of the charms to the other texts in its manuscript, using this textual relationship to deduce who might have used the charm. Hollis was thus able to uncover information about the relationships between the clergy and laity encoded in the manuscript context of the charm which was invisible to scholars focusing exclusively on the content of the charm and the distinction of Christian from pagan material. Karen L. Jolly (1996) similarly spent the first four chapters of her book *Popular Religion in Anglo-Saxon England* exploring the context of elf-charms, the elf-charms themselves being the topic of the fifth and final chapter. Jolly demonstrates

that it is not only the manuscripts which provide context for charm-usage, but also the wider social and cultural context of charms.³ These context-based approaches, therefore, advance on the works of Grendon and Storms by *beginning* with a consideration of a charm's content and then *expanding* their discussion by relating this evidence to the texts surrounding the charm.

The charms, therefore, are texts that come with baggage: they are integrated into their manuscripts, connected to the surrounding texts by similar themes, imagery or modes of performance. The information that is encoded in the texts surrounding the charms is the key to unlocking the meaning, reception and modes of performance of the charms; for example, if a charm is provided without any guidance concerning whether the charm is to be spoken, sung or chanted, one may turn to the surrounding texts in the manuscript for assistance. A charm that is recorded alongside hymns or psalms, for example, might be more likely to be sung or chanted than one recorded among laws and charters. Performance is not the only aspect of the charms that is illuminated by reference to the charms' context: connections between the charms and other texts can reveal the function of the charms and the significance of the truncated and often obscure narratives which form the body of so many Anglo-Saxon charms. The ideal approach to the charms, therefore, takes account of the metadata encoded in surrounding texts, and is based on reading the charms within their context. This allows the modern reader, insofar as is possible, to reconstruct the Anglo-Saxon experience of the charms. However, the easiest way for a modern reader to access the texts is via an edition; the seminal editions of the charms – and the only recent large-scale studies of the charms – are Grendon and Storms' works.

The Examples under Discussion

The charms in London, British Library, Royal 2.a.xx, or 'The Royal Prayerbook' (s.ix¹) are not accompanied by titles or many instructions, and so it is difficult to be certain of their function or modes of performance; this is further confused by the fact that these charms orbit around a tantalisingly obscure

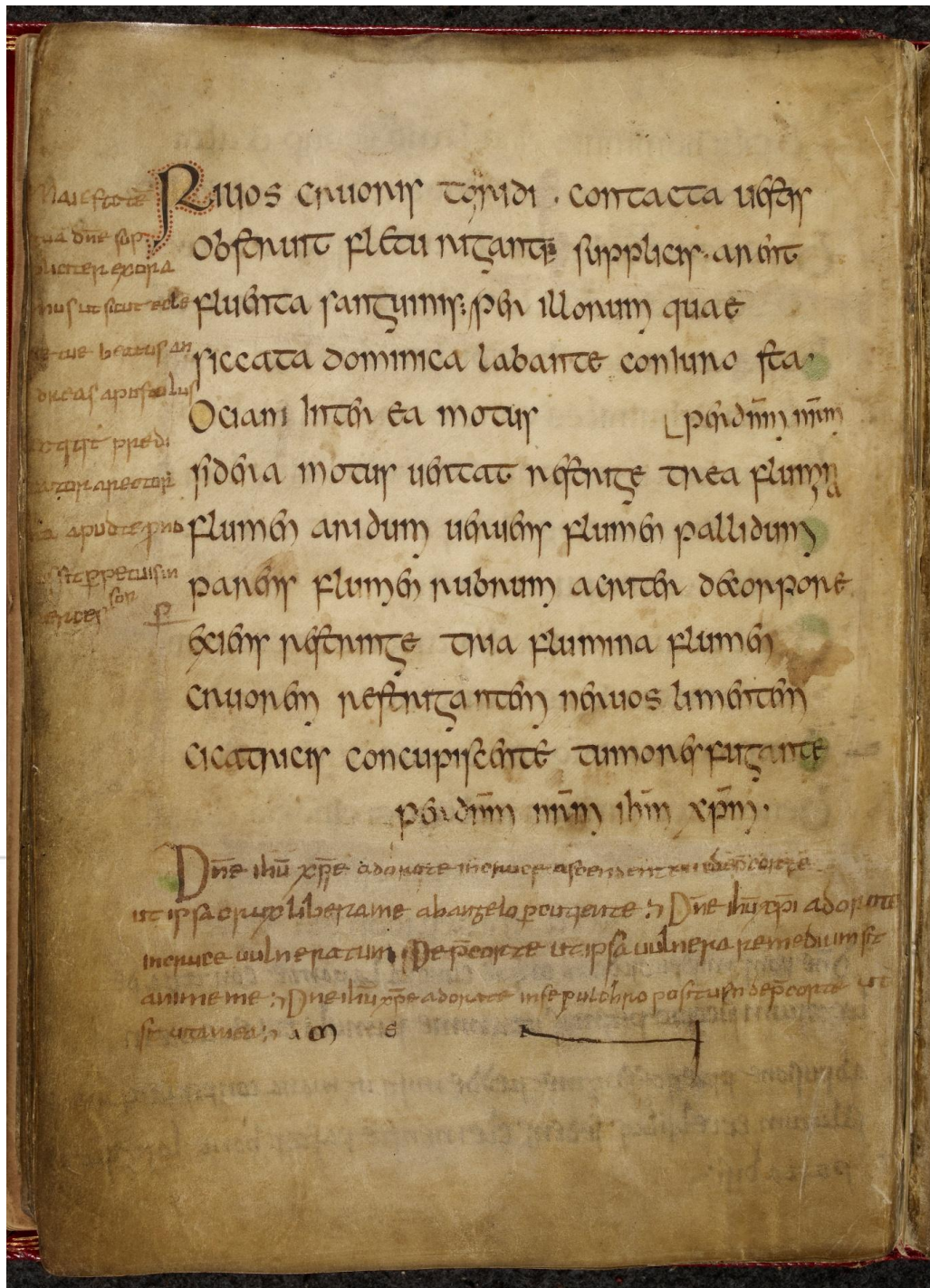


Figure 1. Charms 1 and 2, Royal 2.A.xx (© British Library Board; reproduced with permission of London, British Library).

apocryphal narrative. Charms 1–4 appear in the main body of the manuscript, whereas Charm 5 is recorded in a 12th-century hand on a flyleaf appended to the end of the manuscript, along with several other charms recorded at the same time. Transcriptions and translations of the original text are here accompanied by manuscript images, which show the spacing and presentation of the

texts. (The use of ‘+’ as a sign in the text transcriptions will be addressed below.)

Charm 1 (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 16b)

Rivos cruoris torridi. contacta vestis obstruit
fletu riganti supplicis arent fluenta
sanguinis. per illorum quae siccata dominica
labante coniuro sta. Per dominum nostrum.

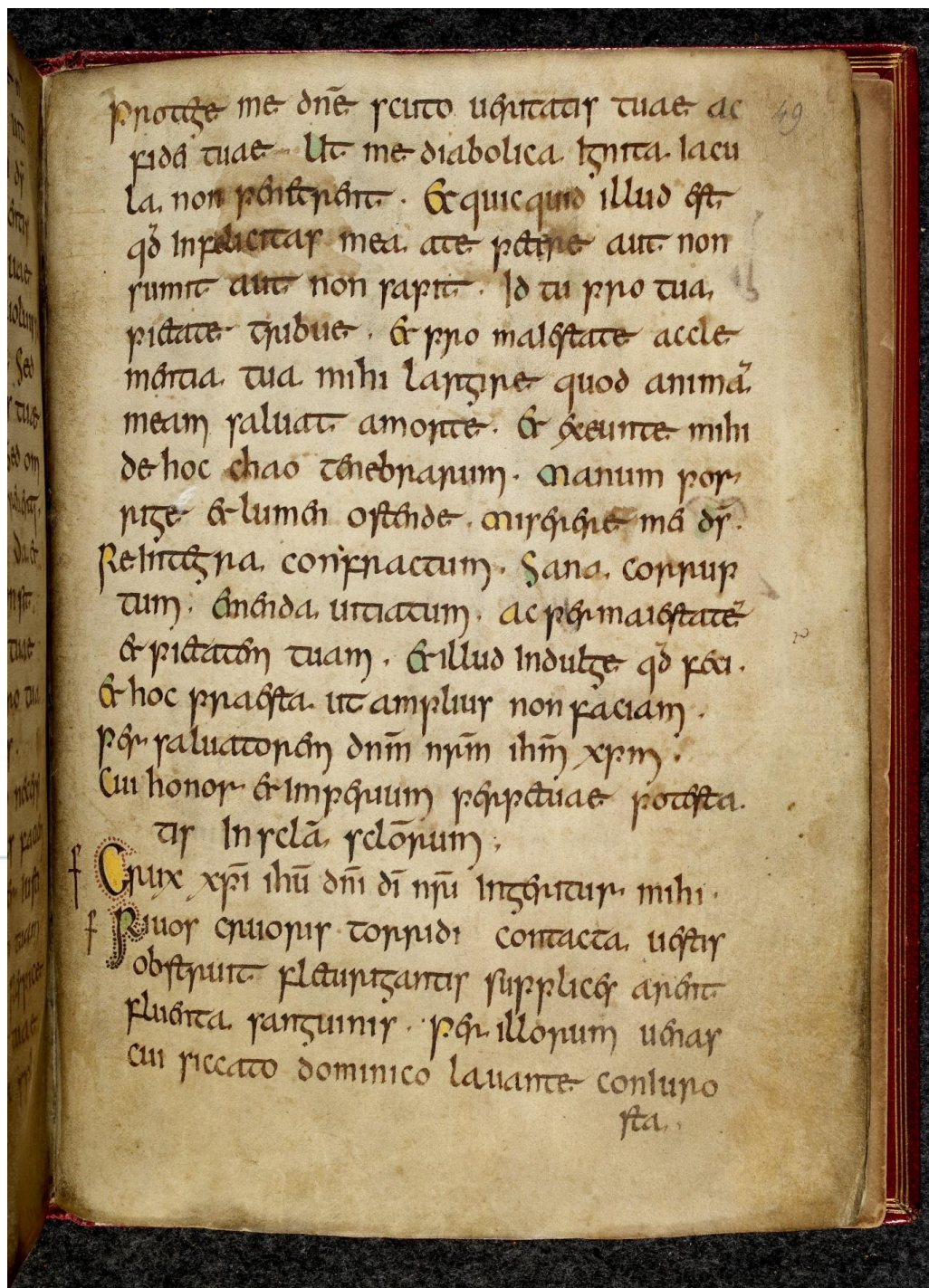


Figure 2. Charm 3, Royal 2.A.xx (© British Library Board; reproduced with permission of London, British Library).

By the touch of his garment he impeded streams of hot blood. By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up. Through that which was dried up by the work of the Lord, I order you, stop. Through our Lord.

Charm 2 (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 16b)

Ociani inter ea motus sidera motus vertat.
restringe trea flumina flumen aridum vervens

flumen pallidum parens flumen rubrum
acriter de corpore exiens restringe tria
flumina flumen crurorem restringentem
nervos limentem cicatricis concuspiente
tumores fugante. Per dominum nostrum
Iesum Christum.

Let [it] turn back from her between the
movement of the ocean, movements of the
stars. Restrain three rivers, a dry river
[burning], a pale river appearing, a red river

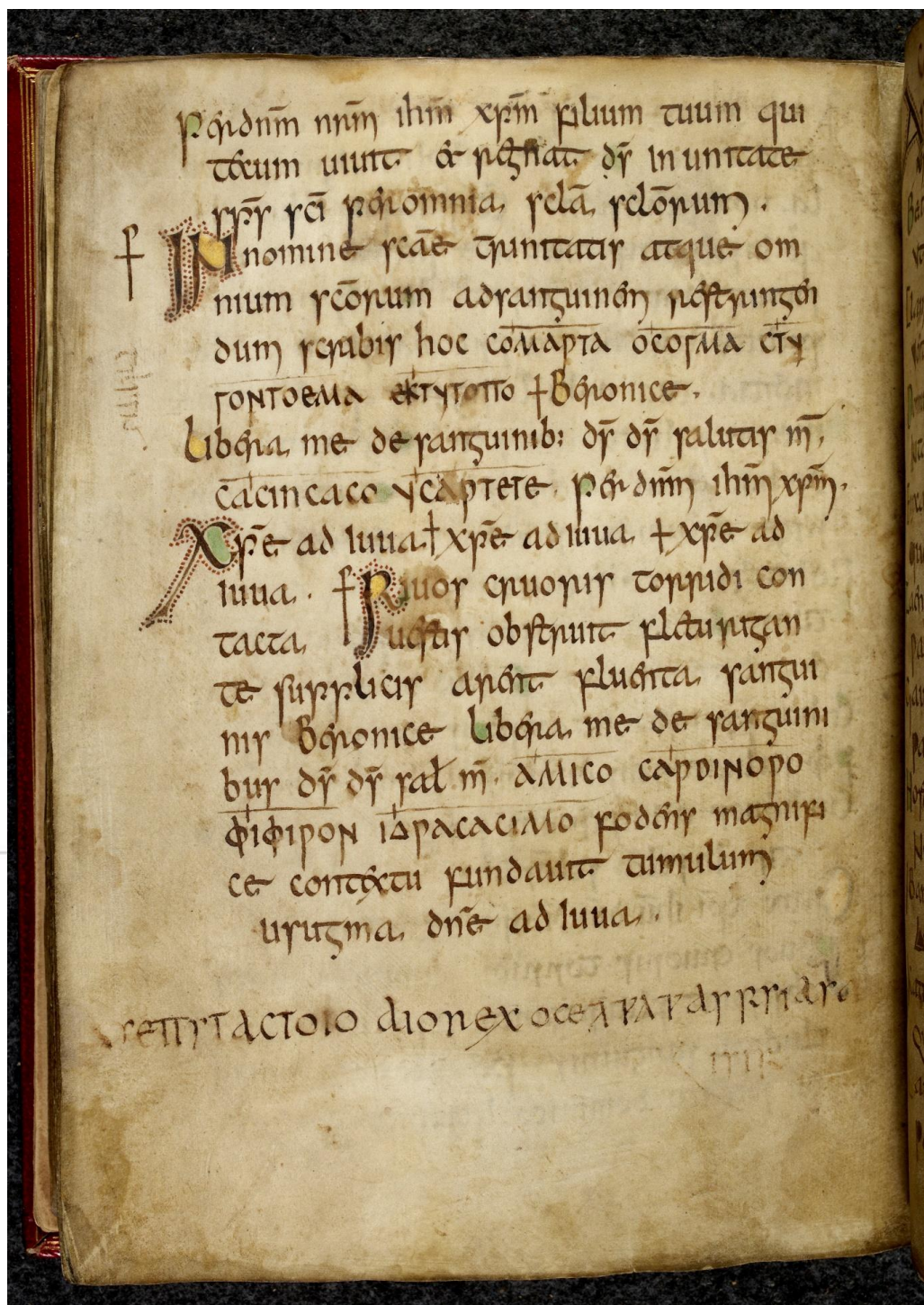


Figure 3. Charms 3 and 4, Royal 2.A.xx (© British Library Board; reproduced with permission of London, British Library).

flowing bitterly from the body. Restrain three rivers, a river of blood, desirous of staunching sinews and pathways of scars, curing the swelling. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.⁵

Charm 3 (Royal 2.A.xx, f. 49–50)

+ Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigantis supplices arent fluenta

sanguinis. per illorum venas cui siccato dominico lavante coniuro sta.

Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum.

By the touch of his garment he impeded streams of hot blood. By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up.

Through those veins which were dried up by the work of the Lord, I order you, stop.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ your son who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, for all time.

Charm 4 (Royal 2.a.xx, f. 50)

Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat deus in unitate spiritus sancti per omnia saecula saeculorum. +IN nomine sanctae trinitatis atque omnium sanctorum ad sanguinem restringen dum scribis hoc COMAPTA ΟCΟΓΜΑ CΤΥΓΟΝΤΟΕΜΑ ΕΚΥΤΟΠ +Beronice. Libera me de sanguinibus deus deus salutis mei. CACINCACO YCAPTETE Per dominum Iesum Christum. Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva + Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigante supplicis arent fluente sanguinis. Beronice. Libera me de sanguinibus deus deus salutis meae AMICO CAPDINOΡΟΦΙΦΙΡΟΝ ΙΑΡΑCΑCΙΜΟ. fodens magnifice contextu fundavit tumulum usugma. domne adiuva.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ your son who lives and reigns in unity with God the Holy Spirit for ever and ever + In the name of the Holy Trinity and all the saints to stop blood write this: [Greek] ‘Stop the blood from the place’. + Veronica. Free me from bloods, O God, God of my salvation. [Corrupt Greek phrase telling disease to ‘go away’.] Through the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ help me + Christ help me + Christ help me + + By the touch of his garment he impeded streams of hot blood. By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up. Veronica. Deliver me from blood, O God, thou God of my salvation. [Greek] ‘Having reaped, I established a lofty-roofed monument’. [Latin translation of Greek, *fodens magnifice contextu fundavit tumulum usugma.*] Lord, help me.

Charm 5 (Royal, 2.A.xx, f. 52)

In principio erat verum. et verbum erat apud deum et deus erat verbum. Hoc erat in principio apud[...]. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nichil. Deus propitius esto mihi peccatori (-trici) famulo (-la) tuo (-e) N. 7 de eius plaga (t corpore) amplius gutta sanguinis non exeat. Sic placeat filio dei sancte que eius gentrici MARIE. in nomine + patris cessa sanguis.

+in nomine filii resta sanguis.+ in nomine spiritus sancti fugiat omnis dolor 7 effusio a famulo (-la) dei. N. Amen +In nomine sancte trinitatis, patris noster. Hoc dic novies.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God. It was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. ‘Gracious God, be kind to me, a sinner, your servant, N’ and do not let a drop of blood fall from the great wound of the body. Thus if it pleases the holy Son of God and his mother Mary, in the name of the Father, stop blood. In the name of the Son, rest blood. In the name of the Holy Spirit flee all pains and outpouring from the servant of God N. Amen. In the name of the Holy Trinity, Pater Noster. Say this nine times.

Perspectives from a Content-Based Approach

An initial reading of the content of the charms alone does reveal some information about the function of the texts. All of the charms revolve around bleeding, which is explicitly expressed in Charms 4 and 5. Charm 4 asks God to *libera me de sanguinibus* [‘free me from bloods’], and Charm 5 declares *cessa sanguis* [‘stop, blood’]. Charms 1 and 3, however, imply their function as cures for bleeding through the repetition of a single narrative, which also appears in Charm 4:

Rivos cruoris torridi contacta vestis obstruit fletu rigantis supplices arent fluenta sanguinis. per illorum venas cui siccato dominico.

By the touch of his garment he impeded streams of hot blood. By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up.

This narrative tells the story of an unnamed petitioner of indeterminate gender who is healed of bleeding by appealing to an unnamed man, and touching the unnamed man’s clothing. However, without additional context, several aspects of the narrative remain unclear: the gender and identity of the ‘suppliant’ whose bleeding is stopped is not clear, and the identity of the man who brings about the cure is not immediately apparent. What we can deduce, however, is that the charms containing this narrative are probably

Seven sleepers
charm 1: *de omnis
malo* (against all
evils)

Seven sleepers
charm 2: *fac dormire*
(against
sleeplessness)

Charm invoking St
Blasus: against
sore throats¹

Blood-charm 5
Charm invoking St
Cassius:

*Sanctus Cassius
minutam habuit*
(against smallpox)

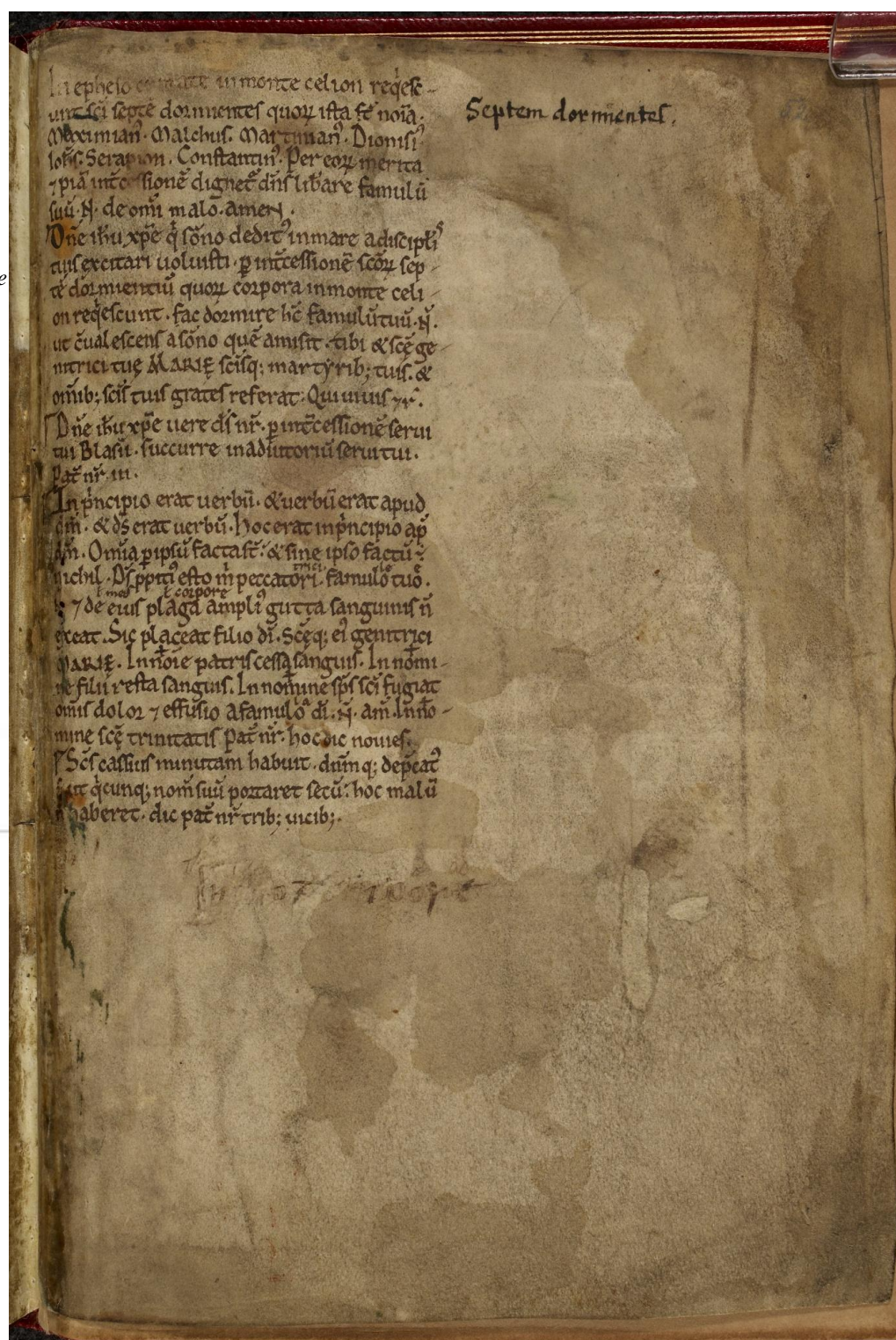


Figure 4. Charm 5, Royal 2.a.xx (© British Library Board; reproduced with permission of London, British Library).

intended to function as cure for bleeding: they refer to 'streams of hot blood' and a 'flood of blood' which are 'impeded' and 'dry up'. Charm 2 takes a slightly different tack, using not the *rivos*-narrative but a narrative about the ocean, the stars and three rivers (see above). Again, the referents of the narrative

are not obvious: we do not know which ocean, stars or rivers are mentioned. On the other hand, especially when read alongside the other four charms, we could assume that the 'river of blood' represents bleeding; perhaps the ocean, moon and stars are also being invoked in order to emphasise the lack

or disruption of natural rhythms being experienced by the patient. The feminine ablative object *ea* provides a link between a flowing liquid and natural rhythms. Bleeding and natural rhythms in a female patient imply that the problem is connected to menstrual flow, suggesting that the charm is intended to help remedy disruptions to normal menstrual flow.⁶ By relating a narrative which either explicitly refers to the stopping of blood or obliquely invokes the regularity of natural physical rhythms and flowing liquids, the performer hopes that their own situation will reflect that of the narratives. This use of narratives – more commonly known as sympathetic narratives – to change the situation of the patient is common across the corpus of Anglo-Saxon charms. Take, for example, this theft charm (Storms 1948: 204–206), which relates the loss and finding of the True Cross (known to the Anglo-Saxon audience through legend of St Helen, told in the poem *Elene*) and the story of the Crucifixion (placed in *italic font*) so that stolen goods might be returned and the thief punished:

Gyf feoh sy undernumen gif hit sy hors sing
on his feotere oððe on his bridels. Gyf hit sy
oðer feoh sing on þæt hof rec 7 ontend ðreo
candela 7 dryp on þæt hof rec wex ðriwa.
Nemæg hit ðe man na for helan. Gyf hit sy
inorf sing on feower healfa ðæs huses 7 æne
on middan:

*Crux Christi reducat; crux Christi per
furtum periit inventa est. abraham tibi
semitas, vias, montes concludat, job et
flumina, ad iudicii ligatum per ducat.*

*Iudeas Christi crist ahhengon; þæt him com
to wite swa strangum; gedydon heom dæda
ða wyrstan; hy þæt drofe for guldon; hælon
hit him to hearne miclum, ond heo hit na for
helanne mihton.*

If livestock is stolen. If it is a horse, sing
over his fetters or over his bridle. If it is
other livestock, sing over the footprints and
light three candles and drip onto the
footprints the wax thrice. No-one will be
able to hide it. If it is household property,
sing then on the four sides of the house and
once in the middle:

*May the cross of Christ bring it back. The
cross of Christ was lost through a thief and
was found. May Abraham close to you the*

paths, roads, and mountains, and Job the
rivers, and bring you bound to judgment.

*The Jews hanged Christ. To them came a
great punishment. They did to him the worst
of deeds. They paid severely for that; they
hid it to their own great harm, because they
could not hide it.*

By telling the story of the finding of the Cross, the performer hopes that his or her goods will similarly be found and returned; by relating the story of the Crucifixion and the subsequent punishment of the Jews (according to Anglo-Saxon theology), the performer hopes that the thief will be subjected to both divine and worldly punishment. Thus, we can suppose from their similar content that the blood charms were predicated on the same understanding that saying prescribed words could change reality.

Alongside an understanding of how the charms worked, we can also infer how they might have been performed. The theft charm above contains specific performance instructions, such as ‘sing over his fetters or over his bridle’, ‘sing over the footprints’ and ‘light three candles and drip onto the footprints the wax thrice’. The blood charms, however, do not make their performance context quite so clear. Charms 1, 3 and 4 contain direct speech in the form of instructions to the blood: ‘I order you stop’. Charm 5 similarly requires the performer to address the blood: ‘stop, blood’. Charm 4 also contains direct speech in the form of an appeal to God: ‘Free me from bloods, O God, God of my salvation [...] Deliver me from blood, O God, God of my salvation’. This prevalence of direct speech could suggest that the charms are to be spoken aloud. Charm 4 requires the performer to ‘write this: stop the blood from the place’, which also suggests that these texts had a performative element. That Charm 4 requires the creation of a physical object directly mirrors the apotropaic techniques used in the letter of Christ to Agbar featured earlier in the manuscript; indeed, in order to see more clearly how the charms were to be performed, one must turn to their relationship to the other charms in the manuscript.

This is the sum of all the information that can be gleaned through a content-based

approach. Interestingly, Grendon does not mention these charms at all: the most likely explanation for this is that as the texts are in Latin and do not contain any overtly ‘pagan’ material, he has discounted them from his survey of Anglo-Saxon ‘spells’. Storms (1948: 293–294), on the other hand, does include the charms, but refrains from any lengthy commentary. He comments only on the “magical notions” associated with the word ‘stop’, and compares the charm to a Dutch charm of an unspecified date. Unhelpfully, this only tells us that similar blood charms have existed in other times and places; it does not deepen our understanding of how the Anglo-Saxon witnesses in hand operate. If we turn to a context-based approach, however, it is possible to reveal information about the operation of the charm and how it might have been performed. I will begin with a survey of the content of the blood-charms’ manuscript and how they relate to the charms; I will then discuss how the 10th-century additions to the manuscript, the 12th-century flyleaf and the appearance of the charms on the page affect our interpretations of the function and performance of the charms.

The Content of London, British Library Royal 2.a.xx

London, British Library Royal 2.a.xx, otherwise known as *The Royal Prayerbook*, is a collection of prayers, hymns and Gospel readings which has been dated to somewhere between the second quarter of the 8th century and the first quarter of the 9th century (Gneuss 2001: 79). It forms part of a closely related group of manuscripts known as the ‘Tiberius group’, which consists of Royal 2.a.xx, Harley 7653 (a fragmentary prayerbook, sometimes known as the *Harleian Prayerbook*), Harley 2965 (*The Book of Nunnaminster*) and Cambridge University Library Ll.1.10 (*The Book of Cerne*). Although each of these manuscripts share striking similarities in content, Royal is the only one to contain, in addition to the shared material, an apocryphal letter from Christ to Agbar, a hymn by Sedulius and a fascinating 12th-century flyleaf.⁷ The contents of this manuscript are varied, described by N. Ker as

“glosses, titles, notes and scribbles” (Ker 1957: 317). Gneuss (2001: 79) gives us more specific details, summarised thus:

- Gospel extracts (Latin)
- The Pater Noster and the Creed (Latin with Old English [OE] gloss)
- The apocryphal letter of Christ to Agbar (Latin)
- Three canticles (Latin with OE gloss)
- Two charms (Latin)
- Prayers (Latin)
- A litany (Latin)
- Two creeds (Latin)
- A note on moonrise (OE)
- An exorcism (Latin)
- Two hymns (Latin)
- Additions and glosses in OE (s.xⁱ, s.x med)

It is difficult, on first glance, to perceive any thematic links between the items in this eclectic collection of texts. The large number of prayers and devotional readings (such as the Gospels) recorded in this manuscript suggest that the compiler’s primary focus was on personal devotion. However, it is possible to be more specific about the precise nature of a large swathe of the texts in this collection which centre on the theme of spiritual and physical health and healing. By attempting to perceive the organising principles the compiler followed when creating this manuscript, it is possible to situate each individual text within this larger thematic structure, and in doing so, to reveal more about each text’s purpose and function.

Charms have been traditionally interpreted as texts for healing physical ailments by invoking supernatural forces (Storms 1948: 5–6), but Royal provides a context which suggests that Charms 1–5 should, instead, be read as texts integrated into a programme of personal devotion and spiritual and physical protection from harm. In *Religion and Literature in Western England 600–800* (1990), Patrick Sims-Williams gives an interesting account of the contents of Royal which allows us to situate the charms in the context of a manuscript focused on physical and spiritual healing (Sims-Williams 1990: 273–327). To paraphrase Sims-Williams’ description of the contents, it is possible to identify six clear sections in Royal:

1. Texts which emphasise Christ and the saints' power to heal
 - Gospel lections
 - Comfortable words
 - Miracles
 - Powers
2. The healing power of physical objects
 - Letter from Christ to Agbar
3. Songs in praise of God
 - *Magnificat*, *Benedictus* and *Benedicte*
4. Charms
 - Charm 1 and 2

—a break in the manuscript—

 - *Oratio sancti Hygibaldi abbatis*

—texts that do not engage the theme of healing—
5. Charms
 - Charms 3 and 4
6. Hymn relating healing miracles
 - *Carmen Sedulii*
7. Flyleaf
 - Charm 5 (along with two Seven Sleepers charms for sleeplessness/fever, a charm for sore throats and a charm against pox)

The first section begins with Gospel lections which consist of the beginning and ending of the first three Gospels, as well as the beginning of John. The function of these excerpts seems to have been to stand for the whole of each Gospel, and in doing so, to channel the apotropaic or healing characteristics associated with the Gospels (Sims-Williams 1990: 292). In Anglo-Saxon England, this function was particularly associated with the opening of John; this excerpt bookends the whole manuscript, appearing not only in the first section of the manuscript, but also in Charm 5 on the 12th-century flyleaf (*In principio erat verum* ['In the beginning was the Word'], and so forth). The first section of the manuscript continues with the 'comfortable words', which promise 'salvation to all believers'; narratives of Jesus' healing miracles; and texts which describe the powers (particularly to heal) given to the saints by Christ (Sims-Williams 1990: 290–291). This entire first section is suffused with the belief that faith can heal, and that Jesus and the saints will effect the healing of the spiritual and physical ailments of the faithful.

The second section takes up the theme of protection from harm: a letter from Christ to

Agbar, which, as Christopher Cain (2009: 170, 176) asserts, acted as a prophylactic amulet throughout the Middle Ages. The letter protects the holder from spiritual and physical harm (Cain 2009: 177); particularly pertinent are the lines which echo the comfortable words in the first section and once again bring together spiritual wholeness with physical health:

'... as it is written, whoever believes in me will be saved.... Whether in hail or thunder, you will not be injured, and you will be free from all dangers...' (Cain 2009: 177.)

The third section, an oratio, reinforces the theme of healing, and seems to have been adapted from rites for the visitation of the sick (Sims-Williams 1990: 296). It consists of the *Magnificat*, *Benedictus* and *Benedicte*, and might seem jarring in the lack of specific mention of health and healing. The last text, however, seems to be included on the grounds of its relationship to the first five chapters of the Vulgate Daniel, in which the Song of the Three Children is related: three young men (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, also called Ananias, Azarias and Misael) are cast into a furnace by Nebuchadnezzar and sing a song praising God, resulting in their survival of the fire. This song – also known as the *Canticum trium puerorum* – was excerpted into one text, now more commonly referred to as the *Benedicte*, and, as in the Anglo-Saxon period, is used in the liturgy of Easter services and in the saying of psalms (Farrell 1972: 5–6). The *Canticum* is also related to the Old English *Daniel*, recorded in the Exeter Book (Exeter Cathedral Library, MS 3501), in which the song is rephrased and reordered, but retains the sense of the *Canticum* as it appears in the Vulgate. The relationship between the *Canticum* or *Benedicte* and healing is reinforced by the appearance of part of the Latin text (placed in italic font) in an Anglo-Saxon charm against elf shot (Storms 1948: 248–249):

Gif hors ofscoten sie, nim þonne þæt seax þe
þæt hæfte sie fealo hryperes horn and sien
III ærene næglas on. Writ þonne þam hors
on þam heafde foran Cristes mæl þæt hit
blede: writ þonee on þam hricge Cristes mæl
and leopa gehwylcum þe þu ætfeolan mæge.

Nim þonne þæt winestre eare, þurhsting
 swigende. Þis þu scealt don: genim ane
 girde, sleah on þæt bæc þonne biþ þæt hors
 hæl. And awrit on þæs seaxes horne þas
 word: *Benedicte omnia opera domini
 dominum*. Sy þæt ylfa þe him sie, þis him
 mæg to bote

If a horse is elf-shot, take that knife of which
 the handle is made from the fallow horn of
 an ox, and let there be three brass nails on it.
 Then inscribe a cross on the forehead of the
 horse, so that blood flows from it, then
 inscribe a cross on the back of the horse and
 on all limbs into which you can prick. Then
 take the left ear and pierce it in silence. This
 you shall do: take a rod, beat the horse on
 the back – then it is cured. And write these
 words on the horn of the knife: *blessed be
 all the works of the Lord*. Whatever elf has
 taken possession of it, this will cure him.

This is followed by the first of the charms,
 Charm 1 and 2, after which follows a break in
 the collection – a leaf is missing – and the
 next text (*Oratio sancti Hygbalði abbatis*)
 begins on a new quire (Sims-Williams 1990:
 299). According to Sims-Williams, the theme
 of healing does not recur until the next two
 charms (3 and 4) on folio 49, the final entry in
 the manuscript (an abecedarian hymn known
 as *Carmen Sedulii de natale domini nostri
 Iesu Christi*) and the charms on the flyleaf.

Clearly, the theme of health and healing is
 the reason why the charms were included in
 this eclectic collection; but there are more
 specific ways to connect the charms to their
 textual neighbours. The strongest link
 between the charms and the other texts in
 Royal ties together Charms 1–4 and the
Carmen Sedulii, confirming the purpose of
 the charms and explaining why someone
 might have added yet another blood charm on
 the flyleaf two hundred years after the
 manuscript was first compiled. The *Carmen
 Sedulii* tells the story of Jesus' life, with each
 four-line stanza beginning with a letter of the
 alphabet. Beginning with A and running all
 the way through to Z, the hymn relates the
 miracles of Christ. The miracle appearing in
 the R-verse is also found in Charms 1, 3 and
 4:

Rivos cruoris torridi
 contacta vestis obstruit

fletu rigantis supplices
 arent fluenta sanguinis.

By the touch of his garment he impeded
 streams of hot blood. By the flowing tears of
 the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up.

This verse⁸ tells the story of an unnamed
 woman healed by Christ of an issue of blood
 which is found in both Biblical and
 apocryphal accounts. When the tale is
 recounted in the Gospels, Matthew, Mark and
 Luke do not provide the name of the woman,
 but they do clarify her gender, a fact which is
 missing from the R-verse in the hymn and the
 charms:

Just then a woman who had been subject to
 bleeding for twelve years came up behind
 him and touched the edge of his cloak. She
 said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I
 will be healed.' Jesus turned and saw her.
 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith
 has healed you.' And the woman was healed
 from that moment. (Matthew 9:20–22.)⁹

Matthew's account of this healing is one of
 the ones chosen to be included in the Gospel
 lections at the beginning of the manuscript,
 which again reinforces the relationship
 between Royal as a whole, the *Carmen
 Sedulii*, the charms and the miraculous
 healing of this woman. The name of the
 woman, however, is not provided; for this we
 must turn to apocryphal accounts of the
 healing. The *Acta Pilati* reveals that the name
 of the woman is Beronice, Bernice or
 Veronica (Sims-Williams 1990: 299). The
 earliest association of Veronica with bleeding
 is in *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, which can be
 found in both Latin and Old English
 (Scheidwieiler 1973: 511):

And a woman called Bernice crying out
 from a distance said: 'I had an issue of blood
 and I touched the hem of his garment, and
 the issue of blood, which had lasted twelve
 years, ceased.

This woman, Beronice/Veronica, plays a
 range of roles in Biblical and apocryphal
 tradition: an unnamed suppliant, a saint, a
 patron of serious wounds and bleeding, who
 first appears as, according to Mary Swan
 (2002: 23):

a princess called Berenice who receives the image of Christ, and gradually Berenice [also becomes known as Veronica and] gets identified with the woman in the gospels who is cured of bleeding by Christ after she touches the hem of his garment.

Swan also comments on Veronica being the woman who wipes Jesus' face on his way to the Crucifixion (2002: 24). Apocryphal accounts also tell us that Beronice/Veronica healed the Emperor Tiberius. As both the healed and a healer, Veronica is a perfect fit for the interests of the compiler of Royal, whose choices of texts demonstrate his/her interest in physical and spiritual healing. Charms 1–3 do not provide a name for the suppliant in the narrative, but Charm 4 makes the relationship between the *rivos*-narrative and Veronica explicit in the expressions 'write this: [Greek] 'Stop the blood from the place'. + Veronica'' and 'By the touch of his garment he impeded streams of hot blood. By the flowing tears of the suppliant the flood of blood will dry up. Veronica.'

She is invoked directly after the R-verse, which helps to confirm the connection between the suppliant and Veronica, but she is also mentioned after the Greek phrase which asks for blood 'from the place' to be stopped. As Sims-Williams (1990: 299) notes, *topos* was a sexual euphemism in Greek medical texts, which might suggest that Charm 4 – if not 1–3 as well – are intended to remedy excessive menstrual bleeding. Sims-Williams uses the mention of Beronice/Veronica as a basis for extrapolating outwards to the use and ownership of the manuscript as a whole. He suggests that the compiler of Royal might have copied texts from an exemplar which had a female owner, which might indicate that the compiler/user/owner of Royal was also female:

the prominence of charms to ease bleeding that refer to Christ's healing of Beronice (the woman afflicted by the flux of blood) suggests that some of its material was drawn from a compilation made for female use. (Sims-Williams 1990: 282.)

Michelle P. Brown (2001: 56–57) has supported this reading, suggesting that several

linguistic features in the manuscript and marginal ownership inscriptions reinforce the feminine context. Brown notes that the miracles quoted in the first part of Royal involve ministrations to women (Peter's mother-in-law, Jairus' daughter and Veronica), and the litany has a similarly feminine focus. The gender of the compiler/user/owner cannot be definitively decided, but the argument that the charms could be read as a cure for menorrhagia are persuasive: Charm 2 invokes the regularity of natural rhythms, while Charm 4, as the most comprehensive witness, explicitly invokes Veronica as an intercessor for a person suffering from bleeding from the *topos*. What is definitely clear from the appearance of Beronice/Veronica is that she situates the charms in the context of Royal's function as a manuscript of personal devotion. Veronica is told by Christ, 'daughter, your faith has healed you'; like Veronica, perhaps the compiler/user/owner of Royal also hoped that belief, faith and devotion would bring about his/her physical and spiritual wholeness. The surrounding texts, therefore, can illuminate the function of the charms and their significance within the collection.

The 10th-Century Additions to Royal

Sims-Williams does not consider the additions, which I would suggest serve to confirm Royal's status as a book of healing even two centuries after its original compilation. Charms 1 and 2 have perhaps the most interesting relationship with their surrounding texts, in that they are also accompanied by additions to the text. The additions can be seen in Figure 1, with translations provided below:

Prayer: Maiestatem tuam

Maiestatem tuam, Domine, suppliciter exoramus: ut, sicut Ecclesiae tuae beatus Andreas Apostolus exstitit praedicator et rector, ita apud te sit pro nobis perpetuus intercessor. Per...

We humbly entreat Thy majesty, O Lord: that as the blessed Apostle Andrew was once a teacher and ruler of Thy Church: so he may be a constant advocate for us before Thee. Through...

Prayer: Domine Ihesu

Domine Ihesu Christe adoro te in cruce
ascendentem deprecor ut ipsa crux liberet
me de angelo percuciente. Domine Ihesu
Christe adoro te in cruce vulneratum
deprecor te ut ipsa vulnera remedium sint
anime mee. Domine Ihesu Christe adoro te
in sepulchro positum deprecor te ut mors tua
sit michi vita.

Lord Jesus Christ, I adore you ascending the
Cross: I entreat you that the cross will
liberate me from the striking angel. Lord
Jesus Christ, I adore you wounded on the
Cross: I entreat you that that wound will be
the remedy for my soul. Lord Jesus Christ, I
adore you laid in the tomb: I entreat you that
your death will be my life.

These additions, dated to the 10th century
(Gneuss 2001: 79), fit neatly into the thematic
context of Royal as both invoke stories of
miraculous healing. The first addition to the
folio on which Charms 1 and 2 are recorded
invokes St Andrew, who, in apocryphal
histories was involved in many miraculous
healings. For example, Gregory of Tours tells
us that oil that flows from Andrew's tomb is
used to heal the sick, and relics from his tomb
protect a man from fire. In Gregory's account,
Andrew is described explicitly as a doctor:

How long, most beloved [brothers], will you
tire yourselves with pointless effort by
requesting medicine from men, when there
is here a celestial doctor who has often
healed the diseases of ill people, not by
administering [medicinal] herbs but by the
application of his own power?' 'And who,'
they asked, 'is this doctor?' The bishop
replied, 'He is Andrew, an apostle of
Christ.'¹⁰

In this way, St Andrew is linked with the
concept not only of the medical healing of
physical ailments, but also with the healing of
the body and soul through the power of
Christ. This concept links directly to the
message of the *rivos*/Veronica-narrative in
Charm 1: 'take faith, daughter; your faith has
healed you'. The Anglo-Saxon reader of
Royal might also have been familiar with the
figure of St Andrew as represented in the Old
English poem *Andreas*, in which Andrew is
himself healed by Christ:

[...] heht his lichoman
hales brucan: 'Ne scealt ðu in henðum a leng
searohæbbendra sar þrowian.'
Aras þa mægene rof, sægde meotude þanc,
hal of hæfte heardra wita.
Næs him gewemmed wlite, ne wloh of
hrægle
lungre alysed, ne loc of heafde,
ne ban gebrocen, ne blodig wund
lice gelenge, ne laðes dæl,
þurh dolgslege dreore bestemed,
ac wæs eft swa ær þurh þa æðelan miht
lof lødende ond on his lice trum.
(Andreas 1466b–1477.)

[God] bade him enjoy his body in
soundness: 'Thou shalt by no means suffer
pain any longer amid the slights of foemen',
Then the brave man in might rose up, healed
from grievous torments, gave thanks to God
from his prison; his fairness was undefiled,
neither was the fringe rent violently from his
robe, nor a lock from his head, nor a bone
broken, nor a bloody wound of hurtful kind,
nor a part of his body wet with gore from a
blow; but again as erstwhile by the glorious
power he was offering praise and was sound
in his body. (Gordon 1957: 206.)

The first addition, therefore, is closely linked
with the central theme of Royal: the health
and healing of the soul and body and the role
of faith in this process. Unlike the first
addition, the second addition does not invoke
St Andrew explicitly, but is related to the
liturgy used for the veneration of Andrew.
The addition consists of part of Andrew's
address to the Cross before his crucifixion.
This prayer is used in the antiphons forming
part of the service performed on Andrew's
feast day (Walsh 1981: 104), and also appears
in the *Regularis Concordia* as part of the
service of the Veneration of the Cross to be
performed on Good Friday (Conner 2008:
45). In the addition, the performer asks for
intercession from Christ for eternal salvation
and relief from a wounded soul – just as the
first appeals to Andrew – and invokes Christ's
miraculous rescue from corporeal death. Both
of these additions, therefore, were added by a
scribe who understood the function of Royal
as a book which allows the performer to
appeal for the health of their body and their
soul: again, the reader is struck by how
Christ's comforting words to Veronica

connect all of these text into one coherent collection: 'take heart, daughter; your faith has healed you'.

The 12th-Century Flyleaf

Although the flyleaf was added as much as four hundred years after the original compilation of the manuscript, and up to two hundred years after the addition of the marginal texts, a clear link between the flyleaf, additions and main text can be perceived. This is entirely elided by Storms, who does not make it clear that the *in principio*-type charm (referred to here as Charm 5) in fact has a completely different manuscript context to the other blood charms with which he collects it. The image in Figure 4 (above) shows how the flyleaf texts should be separated, and indicates the function of each text. At first glance, this appears to be a fairly motley collection of charms: a general prophylactic against harm along with charms against sleeplessness, sore throats, bleeding and small pox. However, all these charms are intended to remedy physical ailments, and as such they reflect closely an aspect of the focus of Royal. Furthermore, all the flyleaf texts invoke a Biblical or apocryphal figure to act as intercessor: the seven sleepers, St Blasus, the Trinity and St Cassius all echo the role played by Veronica in the blood charms, and reinforce the message of the first part of the manuscript (that Jesus imbued the saints with the power to heal). Furthermore, just as Veronica is a natural choice for the blood charms – having, in some of her incarnations, been healed of bleeding herself – the seven sleepers, Blasus and Cassius are also logical figures to choose. The sleepers are sleeping, and are therefore ideal for a sympathetic narrative in a sleeplessness charm; Blasus healed a boy of a sore throat, and Cassius was known as a healer of those with smallpox (see Hopkins 2002: 100–102). All of this suggests that the flyleaf scribe understood the context provided by Royal, and added texts that would be consistent with the contents. Even more interesting is the fact that the charms on the flyleaf appear to have shared pre-existing relationships, suggesting that the flyleaf scribe was copying texts in active use. For

example, the Cassius-type charm appears in two other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.xv, f. 125 (Cockayne 1863: 295) and London, British Library, Harley 585, f. 191v (Storms 1948: 315–316), thus indicating that it was enjoying popularity. Furthermore, the Cassius-type charm in Caligula A.xv also appears alongside a witness of the Blasus-type charm on f. 125v, though the Blasus-charm is in a different form to that in Royal (Cockayne 1863: 295). The Blasus and Cassius charms, therefore, were circulating together from the 10th century (as evidenced in Harley 585) through the 11th century (in Caligula A.xv) to the 12th-century witnesses in Royal. That the Royal scribe is aware of this could suggest that s/he has an interest in charming, and has been drawn to Royal because s/he is aware of its status as a book of healing.

A similar relationship is also shared by the seven sleepers charm and Charm 5, both of which appear in London, British Library Cotton Vitellius C.iii on f. 83v. This manuscript is dated to the middle of the first half of the 11th century and is an exclusively medical manuscript, containing, for example, the Old English translations of the *Herbarium of Apuleius* and the *Medicina de Quadrupedibus*. Vitellius C.iii demonstrates that these charms were known from 1025 (the earliest date for Vitellius) until the end of the 12th century (the date of the hand on f. 52r of Royal). The rather different contents of Royal and Vitellius could show that the flyleaf scribe is someone who has an interest in both spiritual and physical healing, and is drawing these interests together by recording charms known from more physical healing contexts – such as Harley 585 and Vitellius C.iii – in a manuscript more concerned with the health of the soul.

The Appearance of the Texts on the Page and the Performance of the Charms

Sims-Williams (1990: 299) suggests that the sign '+', where it appears in the charms, indicates that the sign of the Cross should be made. Storms does not make mention of this, perhaps because the explicitly Christian nature of such an action would contradict his representation of charms as magical; however,

it is certainly the case that the appearance of the charms on the page is crucial to our understanding of the charms. The act of self-signing is well attested in Anglo-Saxon England by sources both recommending the practice and showing it in action (see Jolly 2005: 218; Johnson 2006: 83; McEntire 2002: 95–96): the Cross as a weapon in the battle against sickness, physically enacted through self-signing, can be seen in hagiographic and other religious sources and is an extra tool at the disposal of the Anglo-Saxon Christian concerned with bodily and spiritual healing. It would be an ideal method for the scribe of Royal to ensure the efficacy of the charms, which are intended to secure both physical and spiritual healing. The symbol of the Cross in Royal appears to indicate that the reader should self-sign, the performance of which in itself would boost the efficacy of the words being spoken. Let us look more closely at examples of this in action in the charms.

Throughout Charm 4, the sign of the Cross appears above the Greek words as seen in Figure 5:

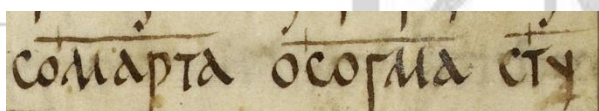


Figure 5. Enlarged image from Figure 3 above, presenting a notation of the cross above each word.

This example is representative of what happens to each Greek word in the text, on every occasion. As the image shows, there are some faint markings above each of the Greek phrases which resemble a cross with an extended right arm, or a long cross turned on to its side. There are several reasons why the scribe might have taken this decision. First of all, the non-vernacular or Latin language might have prompted the scribe to mark these phrases out as significant through the use of a visual symbol. Secondly, perhaps these phrases were highlighted because of their centrality to the charm's efficacy. The first Greek phrase (part of which is shown in the image above) translates as 'stop the blood from the place', a phrase which sums up the purpose of the whole charm. The second Greek phrase translates as 'having reaped, I established a lofty-roofed monument'. It is possible that the second phrase relates to the

process of a scab forming after a wound: that is, the phrase could be read as 'having cut, a scab forms'. This could be describing the process desired by performance of the charm.

Other aspects of the charms that seem to prompt the appearance of the Cross are:

1. The *rivos*-narrative: see Figure 3 above, in which the decorated R in Charm 4 is preceded by an upright cross symbol. The story of the healing of the bleeding woman/Veronica is so central to the charms that it makes sense that the scribe would have marked out each instance as a significant phrase.
2. *Criste adiuva*: see Figure 6 below, in which the sequence "Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva +", is accompanied by an upright cross on the far left. This symbol is clearly given prominence as it is taller than letters in the text. Much like the *rivos*-narrative, this phrase is central to the charms: it allows the performer to appeal to Christ for direct intervention. The importance of the phrase, therefore, could be the reason it is accompanied by the Cross, but the mention of Christ could equally have prompted the need to self-sign.¹¹
3. The name *Beronice*: see Figure 4 above, with a cross symbol preceding the name on the left. Much like the *rivos*-narrative, the mentions of Veronica are central to the charms. Furthermore, perhaps the charmer wishes to mark out her holiness by self-signing, or is boosting the efficacy of invoking her story.
4. The phrase *in nomine*: see Figure 3 above, in which a cross symbol precedes the ornamental 'in' on the left. The *In Nomine* phrase seems to have retained its importance – and the requirement of being accompanied by a Cross – in the later charms recorded on the flyleaf. See Figure 4 above, in which the cross symbol appears above the 'o' of *nomine* in Charm 5.

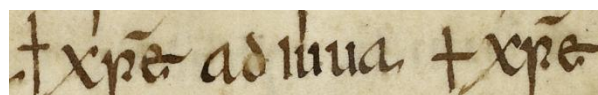


Figure 6. Enlarged image from Figure 4 above, showing a section from the sequence "Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva + Christe adiuva +".

Thus, the desire to self-sign and/or to use the Cross as a marker of significance and a symbol of protection suffuses both the main-

text and flyleaf blood charms. This could indicate a further link between the main scribe and the flyleaf scribe, both of whom regard the Cross-symbol as necessary to the blood charms. As might be expected, however, Charm 2 – which is the most mysterious of the charms – is not accompanied by the same Cross-symbols as the other charms. Instead, it is accompanied with a faint looped Cross (or *chi-ro*: see Figure 1 above, next to the words *parens* and *exiens*). Without examining the appearance of the charms on the page, the reader is left ignorant of the potential performance context of the charms: without recognizing that the sign of the Cross is woven throughout each of these texts, the reader will miss out on a key piece of evidence. Storms (1948: 292–293) does not represent each of these crosses, and so the reader accessing the charm through his edition does not have all the evidence needed to interpret the charms fully.

Conclusions

In this article, I have demonstrated the development in approaches to charms over the last hundred years. Traditionally, charms have been regarded as relics of a pagan past that have been diluted by Christian redactors who were uncomfortable with their pagan content. This interpretation is a direct consequence of excising the charms from their manuscript context. On the contrary, more recent approaches have shown that when charms are read in their manuscript context, it is made clear that the charms were integrated into the religious and daily life of their users, sitting quite happily alongside prayers, laws and herbal recipes. This case study of the blood-charms in Royal demonstrates not only that the charms were woven into the themes of the main text of the manuscript, but that they also shared thematic, formal and functional similarities with later additions to the manuscript. The close relationships between Royal, the charms and the additions revealed by a context-based study show that the charms were integrated into the programme of personal devotion and physical healing used by not only the 8th–9th-century compiler, but at least two later users as well.

Notes

1. Here, I would like to direct the reader to Helen F. Leslie's paper "Younger Icelandic Manuscripts and Old Norse Studies" (this volume) in which the techniques and problems inherent in material philology are discussed.
2. Exemplified by Storms, who says of *Æcerbot* that "although Christian influences [...] have penetrated everywhere, the old heathen practices and units have kept their ground and remain recognisable throughout" (Storms 1948: 178).
3. See also Karen L. Jolly (2005), in which she considers the impact of conversion, popular Christianity, medicine, liturgy and folklore on the interpretation of the elf-charms.
4. See Til-Perez et al. 2001: 267–269.
5. The Latin is problematic; many thanks to Frog for his assistance here.
6. Again, thanks to Frog for his assistance with the interpretation of this text.
7. See Gneuss 2001: 29, 76, 78 and 79 for a summary of the contents of *Cerne*, *Nunnaminster*, *Harleian* and *Royal* respectively.
8. Found in the *Carmen Sedulii*; see Sedulius [n.d.].
9. Cf. the version in Mark 5:32–34: "A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, 'If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.' Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?' 'You see the people crowding against you,' his disciples answered, 'and yet you can ask, "Who touched me?"' But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.' Cf. also the version in Luke 8:42–48: "As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 'Who touched me?' Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, 'Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.' But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.' Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.'"

10. See van Dam 2004: 26–30. Beginning life as part of the apocryphal tradition, the *Actae Andreae* was first recorded in the fourth century by Eusebius, and was condemned as non-canonical by various Church figures. However, despite this attitude towards the apocrypha, Ælfric himself refers to the passions of apocryphal apostles. These apocryphal figures appear in orthodox liturgical texts (such as calendars: Andrew's feast day, according to Bede, is November 30th) and would be relatively familiar in Anglo-Saxon England. See Walsh 1981: 97–122 for a discussion of the sources and use in liturgy of the Andrew legend: see also DeGregorio 2003, 449–464.
11. Counter to these arguments, however, is the fact that the Cross appears twice in the *Christe adiuva* unit to separate the first and second repetition, and the second from the third: that is, the Cross does not appear once for every mention of Christ, as one might expect. It could be the case, therefore, that we are simply seeing a way of separating out these repetitive phrases, to avoid any confusion.

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The Sensitive Interpretation of Emotions: Methodological Perspectives on Studying Meanings in Written Life-Historical Narratives

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The Folklore Archives at the Finnish Literature Society have, for many decades, organized national collection projects that aim at archiving oral history in a written form: personal experiences, collective memory and interpretations of the past and 'writing from below'.¹ These collection projects exploit people's expressive writing capabilities on a voluntary basis. This means that ordinary people are asked to write about a certain theme and tell their experiences in their own words. Usually the calls for entries are published in newspapers and distributed among the Folklore Archives' network of regular respondents.² These thematic writing collections are usually targeted at the general public. As a result, the archive has brought together written data that includes life-historical narratives and biographies as well as opinions, memories, experiences and views on numerous different themes.³ (See also Peltonen & Salmi-Niklander 2007: 5–6). Writing collections have been considered extremely rich and interesting among numerous researchers from different fields, including the authors of the present article. Although the data lacks a face-to-face dimension, the texts are provided with background information about the authors and the researcher may, if he/she desires, contact the respondents and conduct additional interviews.⁴

The methodology for the study of writing collection materials has not been developed as thoroughly as the methodology, for interviews, especially in oral history research (on fieldwork and dialogic methodology see also Sykäri, this volume). The methods used

in analyzing the written narratives vary depending greatly on the aims of research, on the vantages of different disciplines, and on the character of the texts under discussion (Lakomäki et al. 2011). As Finnish sociologist Pertti Alasuutari puts it:

If you study structures of meaning, the way in which people conceive and classify things, the material has to consist of text where *they speak about things in their own words*, not of questionnaires where they have to answer predefined questions by choosing predetermined alternatives. (Alasuutari 1995: 42.)

In the writing collection projects of the Finnish Literature Society, only questions are posed, not predetermined alternatives. Typically, the questions are formulated for example as following: *What is everyday life like at borderlands? Write about your own experiences* ("Everyday life at Borders" collection, 2010);⁵ or *How were political themes discussed in the family?* ("Politics and Power Games" collection, 2006–2007).⁶ Writing enables the expression of thoughts and interpretations stemming from personal experiences and the surrounding environment. People write about various events but also about emotions connected to various events. Although experiences and emotions are personal, different people may experience the same general pattern (Strauss & Quinn 1997: 122; Laurén 2006; Latvala 2006). There are some themes that come up in different collection projects even though they were not specifically highlighted. In Finland, the reinterpretation of experiences from the 1918 Finnish Civil War and the Second World War

(WWII), especially from the perspectives of women and children, has been popular among the archive's respondents.

This article concentrates on some methodological challenges concerning the detailed reading of written individual memoirs sent to the archive. More precisely, it presents how emotions connected to war memories can be approached from a textual surface by applying some strategies familiar from the method of *close reading* (on which see Lentricchia & DuBois 2003). A few years ago, the journal *Oral History* (2010) concentrated on emotions in a special issue *Emotions*, opening the paradigm change, the so-called 'affective turn', in the humanities and social sciences. In that special issue, the relationship between memory and emotions is highlighted by examining non-verbal and verbal cues of shame, joy, anger, love and pain, as well as 'emotion talk' in oral history interviews. The present article tackles the same process, but in written memoirs.

Because wartime narratives typically include fearful memories, expressions of fear (an emotional state that involves intense negative feelings) and fear's connotations are demonstrated. Subjectively, fear takes somewhat different forms; however, it denotes a dread of impending disaster and an intense urge to defend oneself. (Öhman 2010: 710.) Although we use written war memories as an example, the methodological aspects of the sensitive interpretation of emotions are certainly also accessible for oral interviews. These perspectives are useful also for other areas of studies, especially studies of oral history concentrating on trauma/refugee/diaspora narration, but also sensory ethnography, women's history, memory studies, sociology, ethnology, anthropology and even medieval studies. Close reading has been developed in critical literary studies, but in recent years folklorists have applied it for analyzing the life-history texts and memoirs (in Finland especially Pöysä 2006a; 2011: in general see Kain 1998; Mansfield 2008).

Reflective Contextualisation

The elements that are to be presented in a life-historical narration depend on the narrator, narrated theme and the time (see also Pöysä

2006b: 230). The concept of "reflective contextualisation" (Liljeström 2004) refers to the overlapping contexts between personal experiences and official history. Historian Jorma Kalela (2012: 69) notes that popular histories tell us *what* to remember and how or what to regard as insignificant. In addition, the question of *why* one should remember or forget should also be asked, because the narrators take a stand on that as well (Heimo & Peltonen 2012). It is here that the emotional expressions come to reflect the meanings of the whole process of internalizing in memory. Older respondents of the writing collections participate in the unofficial historiography by writing about their childhood experiences of the past, which are often rooted in senses: they remember what they heard, saw, smelled and felt. Senses have been regarded as a trigger to remembering (Hamilton 2011: 220; see also Stanley 1996). As Alistair Thompson (2011: 437) has pointed out, individual remembering also includes *embodied memory*. This paper asks whether the narratives of fear are considered meaningful by the authors and if so, why? Why should fear not be forgotten but retold by writing?

The research material used here has been gathered through written collection projects and deals with the written experiences of a borderland and political culture with a closer look at everyday history.⁷ Different collections always have titles. The "Politics and Power Games" collection project (2006-2007) aimed at gathering memories, narratives and experiences of political culture at the grassroots level.⁸ Emotions were not mentioned. In spite of that, this collection project proved that politics were seen as a very emotional theme. Why is that? One answer lies in Finland's own background, the political history surrounding the Finnish Civil War (1918), WWII and the rich oral history tradition concerning these years. In addition, today in a globalised world, our emotions are fed by the powerful (do-it-yourself) media and image-based politics. Active *e-citizens* produce new political representations all the time by reporting actual riots, posting on YouTube, making funny cartoons etc. (Cf. Stevenson 2003.) In this context, people in Finland found it important to concentrate on

particular aspects of the emotional past and of present political culture, producing “personal political histories.” Retrospective remembering usually ended by concluding with the reasons why politics do or do not interest the respondent.

The “Living at Borderlands – Experiences of Everyday life at Borders” writing collection project (2010), was oriented to gather material about personal experiences of everyday life at Finland’s four national borders (Finland shares borders with Russia, Sweden, Norway and Estonia). Several themes were mentioned in the invitation to write in order to help people recall their memories and to motivate them to participate.⁹ Most of the authors are from North Karelia or South Karelia, near the Finnish–Russian border. About three-quarters of the texts deal with everyday life in the eastern border region of Finland, and the rest of the texts deal with other (southern, western and northern) borders. The themes of the texts vary, for example, from wartime memories, trading and other contacts with neighbors across the borders, to travelling in neighboring countries. Along with the personal features, historical, political, cultural and social events are reflected in many ways in the texts. Emotional expressions, especially the senses of fear, are intertwined with the narration of war events. The most radical changes reflected in most of the texts happened during WWII, when the eastern border of Finland changed and thousands of Finnish families had to leave their home districts. The new border was geographically and politically constructed, but the Finns did not accept it culturally or individually. (Paasi 1999: 13; Lähteenmäki 2009: 11.) Finns nursed a grievance because of the lost regions and, most of all, because of their fallen relatives and friends. The eastern border was close until the 1990s, and interactions between ordinary Finns and Russians were minimal until that time. Now the border is more open and there is lively interaction across it.

Emotions as a Trigger for Style, Form and Genre

Typically, the writers and their forms of writing do not follow the conventions of scholarly ethnographic writing or institutionalized literature but rather combine the conventions of biography, life history, documentary and fiction writing (Laurén 2011: 111). From the folkloristic point of view, it is crucial to open the text carefully and observe that culturally characteristic forms of narration may be used, or that their conventions may be intentionally avoided (see e.g. Bruner 1991; Gullestad 1996: 5–6). In addition, the text may incorporate various folklore or literature genres. The writer may place, for example, proverbs, historical narratives, poems, jokes or even dreams in the middle of life-history narration in order to emphasize particular views and feelings (see Heimo & Peltonen 2012: 42). For example, lyric poetry and poems are in themselves a natural way to impress emotions (Timonen 2004: 401). Furthermore, narrators may practice self-censorship when writing about emotional issues. Strong emotions like fear, for example, could be so sensitive that a narrator feels it impossible to express them explicitly. This kind of unclassified or mixed style of narration makes these writings interesting, yet at the same time, it makes them challenging material for researchers. When the written document is on the researcher’s table, she/he has to disentangle the various types of literally expressed emotional experiences that reveal the writers’ life and people’s sense of the past in order to develop a reading and analysis. These texts make it appear that the emotions attached to the past (time and place) are more important than the past events themselves, and that the feelings actually define what kind of textual artefact will be produced in terms of its form, style and structure.

Careful and detailed reading is useful in order to understand how writers creatively take advantage of different genres, utterances and concepts for their own purposes. The method of close reading typically focuses on the four following separate but interrelated levels of reading: linguistic, semantic, structural and cultural. At the linguistic level,

the reading pays attention to linguistic elements like vocabulary and grammar, and to the writer's individual style. (Mansfield 2009; Kain 1998.) This article seeks to develop a combination of these levels by introducing the *emotional level* of the texts. In life-history texts, the accurate linguistic level might get less attention than the structural, semantic and cultural levels. Nevertheless, the linguistic level does reveal many important features, like the use of the first or third person or changes in grammatical tense. Intentionally or unintentionally, the narrators make choices regarding, for example, genre, voice, use of monologue or dialogue, and intertextuality. The respondents utilize the semantic associations of these choices, and various other narrative means, in order to make their experiences and emotions understandable in a particular time and place, connecting their lives to cultural frames. (See e.g. Hanks 1989; 1996, Fairclough 2003: 47–49; Squire 2008.)

Sensitive reading at the emotional level reveals unofficial and individual accounts of the past based on emotions as narrative templates of ordinary people (cf. Wertsch 2000; 2002: 93).¹⁰ Life-history texts with an emotional tone can reshape our understanding of historical and political changes and affirm historical consciousness, particularly concerning the experiences of those groups that have been left out of official history (children, women and other marginalized groups). Reaching subjective experiences and finding the meanings of tacit knowledge in different kinds of communication may take a researcher to a whole new level of interpreting the culture. Sensitive reading of narrated emotions connected to past events opens up cultural meanings more thoroughly than concentrating only on interpreting events.

As was mentioned above, thematic writing collections usually contain dozens or hundreds of texts. These texts are best understood as culturally framed, contextualised discourse, where the personal emotions concerning the past (in this case especially wartime) are expressed as a part of continuing negotiation of meanings (cf. George M. Goffrey 1993: 36–37). According to Goffrey:

[...] instead of regarding emotions as primarily individual, inner, and private, we might begin to think of emotions as also social, outer and public. (Goffrey 1993: 36.)

This makes an interesting combination in remembering. The construction of both individual and public emotions takes place in the memoirs written for an archive. The texts portray the relationship between authors and the theme as well as the tone the authors take and the reader-images they have (Charmaz 2000: 528; Latvala 2004: 161–162; see also Sheridan 1993). In her study on women's memoirs collected by the National Board of Antiquities, ethnologist Pia Olsson (2011: 49) notes that the narrators sometimes consider their own experiences common to other women as well. In the present research study, this kind of assumption can also be observed: a certain shared position, such as gender, age or other commonality, such as experiences of wartime in childhood, is regarded as an important element for emotional narration. The writers may consider personal experiences more valuable if they can provide not only a personal, but a collective voice for memory organization.

Typically, the authors are capable of expressing themselves clearly and constructing a coherent series of narratives. Strong emotions linked to meaningful episodes of life during the war are hard or impossible to forget. Reminiscing and narrating about, for example, hopeful, pleasant or frightening things in one's personal life can spark off either delightful or painful emotional memories. Asking about certain things can be a trigger for emotions that have been covered up. (See Kaivola-Bregenhøj 2003: 336–340.) In addition, remembering can activate emotional narration in participants, without even asking them, as in the above introduced collections. Memories and narratives dealing with the violence, poverty and injustice in times of war, as well as in everyday life on the Finnish–Russian border, may function as a platform for political discussion. The fate of a grandfather, husband or neighbor as a lost soldier, a political prisoner or as an executed rebel cannot be forgotten. This kind of negative political heritage (cf. Meskell 2002) can be

reversed, instead forming a controlled positive heritage by not forgetting the difficult past but by taking possession of it. Emotions make those memories meaningful by explaining why history happened as it did, and how it affected subsequent generations. Many narrators remember that their parents' hatred for the elite encouraged them to attend to political life and to try to make a difference.

The Finnish Civil War (1918) and the Second World War (1939–1945) are still essential and emotional historical and political themes in Finnish oral history, even as carried over generations (see Andrews 2007 on 'political narratives'). Oral history does not only reinforce grand narratives of the war, but it also buttresses *counter-narratives* (Bamberg & Andrews 2004), reflecting interpretations from alternative to unilateral, male-centered history writing (see also Näre & Kirves 2008). In memoirs, women act as active, fearless heroines during the war, in the traditional positions of male protagonists. The value of the individual's standpoint has broadened the social process of history-making and assured that public, often-idealized discourse on war will be challenged (Latvala 2005; see also Kalela 2012: 67). History-telling situates at the collective and personal levels, from which the history becomes closer (see Portelli 1997: 24–31).

Interpreting Memories of Past Events and Emotions

The closer the themes are to an author, the more emotional narratives will usually become as they incorporate various shades of meaning. By studying personal emotional expressions it is possible to reveal deep and sometimes-veiled information about culturally shared knowledge and its meanings. In life-history texts, cultural elements may come out after a long period of time as people reminisce about their lives from childhood to the present day. By writing about hidden opinions and deep emotions that are otherwise not suitable to express, the writers make themselves and their perceptions visible (Myerhoff 1995: 231).

When reminiscing about everyday life at the Finnish-Russian border today, narrators

may depict that they feel – or have felt – fear regarding the border. The unknown Russian (or earlier Soviet Union) side of the border arouses suspicions. For the Finns, the Russians have been neighbors for centuries; they had been friends, and during the wars, they were forced to become enemies. The beginning of WWII changed everything, including the relationship to the border. Concerning her frightening wartime memories from when she was a teenager (13 years old) in North-Eastern Finland, one 86 year old woman writes:

Vuonna 1939 oli erittäin *sekavaa*. Kaikki suuret maat halusivat yhä suuremmiksi. Oli Stalin, Hitleri, Mussoliini ja monet muut. Saksa valloitti Puolan muutamassa päivässä. Baltian maat joutuivat tulilinjaan. *Me pelättiin ja vapistiin* Neuvostoliiton naapureina. Kesällä isä osti *radion*. Siitä kuunneltiin uutiset, aamu- ja iltahartaus. *Pelko-levottomuus* jatkui. (From the "Everyday life at Borders" collection, SKS, KRA Rajaseudun elämää, 2010, our emphasis.)

It was very *confusing* during the year 1939. Every big country wanted to become even bigger. There were Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini and many others. Germany took over Poland in a few days. The Baltic countries were put on the firing line. *We were afraid and trembled* as a neighbor of the Soviet Union. That summer, father bought a radio. The news, morning devotions and evening prayers were listened to on the *radio*. *Fear and restlessness* was ongoing.

By telling that it was confusing during the year 1939, the author locates the past events (the beginning of war) and time through her emotions. In this text, the author implies that the people ("we") living near the Soviet Union shared the sense of fear. She uses passive forms – *there were; countries were; were listening; was ongoing* – when describing the fearful atmosphere on the threshold of the war. Thus, the author emphasizes that she was not the only one who was afraid but that the feeling was shared. In her narration, she combines the global political situation with the individual everyday life of her family at the border. Radio was an important vehicle to get

information about the outside world, and in addition, to have religious consolation. Everybody felt fear and restlessness, but hearing the latest news on the radio prepared them for the worst. In those days, radio was not common in every household, and things connected to the time when the radio was bought are remembered well. The new radio and moments of listening to it together with family members remains long in the memory on a physiological basis. Thus, the senses are remembered and articulated *as* memory (Hamilton 2011: 221–222).

After WWII and during the era of the Iron Curtain, Russians and their way of life became unfamiliar to Finns; old neighbors and enemies became almost complete strangers to each other. The border was closed, dividing two nation-states and two cultures. By telling about everyday life on the eastern border of Finland, Finnish narrators simultaneously unburden their thoughts about Russians. By a sensitive reading of the expressions of emotions in border narratives, it is possible to observe the culturally shared and sometimes contested meanings Finns have given to the war, and to the eastern border and to Russians as well.

In the border narratives, WWII and its consequences for life in the border region are a sensitive topic – especially for those narrators who experienced the wartime themselves. War memories can include events that involve traumatic experiences. By recalling and narrating sensitive topics and emotions, narrators simultaneously give meanings to their experiences. (See Hydén 2008.) The writers of the border texts are generally older and some of them can still remember their life in lost home areas in Karelia. Even though the narrators were small children or had not yet been born during the wars, they can remember their parents, relatives and other peoples' stories concerning that period. Furthermore, many younger writers have relatives who were born and lived in lost areas. Consequently, among these people, the border theme of the writing collection summoned up many emotional memories. Strong emotions and stories heard were carried from one generation to the next. Senses of fear and the threat of the Soviet

enemy are emotions that come up from many stories of the aged narrators. A sense of fear is clearly expressed in most of the stories but sometimes it is expressed indirectly, or even hidden. Sensitive and detailed reading helps to perceive delicate expressions, as can be seen in the following example, in which one of the respondents, a 79-year-old woman, writes about her wartime memories and the period after the war. Her story stresses happy events in her life near the eastern border and the periods of her life when she was an evacuee in Sweden and Denmark. She did not mention the sense of fear during or after the war. However, there is a sudden, short utterance that exposed the sense of fear that obviously affected her life for a long time:

For me, the most unforgettable thing about the events of the world was the death of Stalin in 1953. I felt surprisingly relieved!¹¹

Although the war was over and life near the Finnish-Russian border was peaceful, people retained fears and suspicions about Russia and its leaders.

In contemporary Finnish society, the eastern border does not evoke fearful feelings among younger generations as much – yet this demographic was not well represented in the collection because younger people did not respond to the call. Russia has opened. People from both sides of the Finnish–Russian border now travel across it and meet each other; they go shopping, do business, and so on. However, the border still exists and is strictly guarded, and politically, culturally and socially, the eastern border is still the most controversial of the Finnish national borders.

The border narratives also include themes where emotional expressions are frequently mentioned although they are not concerned with wartime. The geographic location next to Russia is commonly connected to narration. Finland has often been placed as mentally distant from Russia, although the geographical proximity is a fact. *Russophobia* has been maintained near the border in particular. The fear of Russia has roots going back centuries into history (see for example Karemaa 1998; Vilkuna 2005; Lähteenmäki 2009, Raittila 2011), and this has been retained in oral communication by telling

stories, proverbs and singing songs in the 20th and 21st centuries, especially in the context of individual families. The life-history experiences of leaving a homestead in Karelia or Petsamo as a consequence of the loss of these regions in WWII reinforced these bitter emotions. Of course, for many Finns, the ideological connection to communism in the past has also provoked a positive attachment and admiration towards the eastern neighbor. The children noticed this too by a visual sense, by seeing a meaning of a political symbol, the red flag:

Punainen lippu pelotti ja hämmensi minua, lasta. En voinut ymmärtää vieraan valtion ihailua, jossa kaikki olisivat onnellisia ja tyytyväisiä. Eikö oikeuden ja tasavertaisuuden puolesta voi marssia yhteisen siniristilipun alla? ("Politics and Power Games" collection, SKS, KRA, POL, 2006–2007, our emphasis)

The red flag *scared* and *confused* me as a child. I could not understand how *people admired* the foreign state, where everyone is *said to be happy and pleased*. In order to gain justice and equality – couldn't we just march under the united blue cross flag?

In this example, the respondent conveys her thoughts and the visual environment, political symbols as seen when a child, but it must be observed that there is another voice as well. Remembering predicates her past interpretation: at the moment of writing, the "foreign state" refers to Russia, and "happy and pleased people" to the idea of communism. In the very next sentence, asking for unity under the Finnish flag challenges the essential ideology of communism. Can emotions be understood best both as individual and personal on the one hand and as collective and cultural on the other, against a historical context, as a part of inter-subjective power process? (See Harding 2010: 33–35.) When studying experiences and emotions in texts – or in oral interview – we have to understand the unique perspective of the life-historical (and autobiographical) self: even if people experience an event together, they may remember and respond to that event differently (Fivush 2001: 35; Bela 2007: 25–27). Even though emotions are far from easy

to analyze, they are valuable for researchers in the field of cultural studies.

Summary

This article focused on the subjective dimension of the past: the expressions of personal experiences and multidimensional emotions expressed in written narratives. Scholars may have various features and themes in mind while examining similar types of partially life-historical and so-called 'archived oral history' texts. In spite of this, there is a need for developing shared methodological perspectives and analytical tools in order to examine these individual and emotional texts. Concentrating on the emotional level of the texts and reading them sensitively helps us to observe the continuum of historical meaning making, and to understand the relationship between individual experience and history. We hope to provide new points of view for the interdisciplinary discussion on cross-generational narration on wartime experiences and for the debate on the role of emotions in oral history interviews and other kind of memory texts.

In different cultures, people talk about emotions in different ways and, in addition, give various interpretations to their emotions. How negative or positive emotions are expressed is connected to the moral and behavioral orders of the community. (Siikala 1998: 165.) However, recognizing emotions is rarely an exclusive goal. After perceiving them, a researcher must read the text carefully in order to extricate the multi-layered, contextualized meanings and reasons behind these expressions. The war memories illustrate narrators' use of emotional expressions in various ways when reminiscing about fear connected to the past and how they interpret the past in today's perspective. Through the careful and sensitive reading of the texts, it is possible to examine the affective turn and reveal the individual as well as social and cultural meanings that people give to different things and occasions.

The politics connected to questions of wartime and borders are highly emotional themes in Finland, owing partly to Finland's political history. Even today, younger

generations are interested in the past, especially in the fates of their grandfathers and grandmothers or other relatives during the 1918 Civil War and WWII. There is a collective need to understand why we, as a nation or at least as some part of it, have inherited a particular negative heritage and strong emotions like guilt, shame, fear and hate. These mental processes can be seen in the different oral history collections that we have been examining ("The Great Narrative of the Family", "Politics and Power Games", "Living at Borderlands"). In addition, the emotional narratives are crucial in those collections that reveal the Finns' thoughts about their eastern neighbors, the Russians. The writing collections and research projects mentioned above are part of the Finnish archived oral history research tradition, which has become popular during the last 20 years. This research tradition focuses on not only the past but also on present and future meanings and hopes as well. (Pöysä & Timonen 2004: 242.) It has been the task of this article to offer a closer look into a relationship between personal experiences, emotions and meanings of history-narration that has its continuum in the present-day environment, both the mental and physical.

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Notes

1. 'Writing from below' refers to writings by people who are not professional authors (such as amateur authors).
2. The Folklore Archive has about 200 voluntary respondents living all around Finland.
3. See information about collecting folklore on the web-pages of Finnish Literature Society at http://www.finlit.fi/english/kra/coll_guide.htm.
4. Somewhat similar collection projects have also been organized outside Finland, for example in Estonia (see Jaago 2003), Norway (see Gullestad 1996), and cf. *the Mass Observation Project* in Britain (see Sheridan et al. 2000).
5. SKS, KRA, Rajaseudun elämää, 2010.

6. SKS, KRA, Politiikkaa ja valtapeliä, 2006–2007.

7. In recent years, the authors of the present article have done research on the following writing collections: "The Great Narrative of the Family", 1997 (Latvala; organized by the Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literature Society with Finland 80 Years Committee, the Finnish Local Heritage Federation and the Kalevala-Women's Association; "Mire Story", 1998 (Laurén; organized by the Finnish Peatland Society and the Union for Rural Education and Culture); "I Found Myself from the Forest" (Laurén; organized by Metsäkustannus Ltd); "Politics and Power Games", 2006–2007 (Latvala; organized by the Folklore Archive of the Finnish Literature Society with the Union for Rural Culture and Education Finland 90 Years, the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations, the Women's Working Group for Rural Development, the Finnish Social Science Data Archive), "Living at Borderlands", 2010 (Laurén; organized by the Finnish Literature Society and the Academy of Finland project Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders, <http://www.uef.fi/wctb>).

8. In the "Politics and Power Games" collection campaign (2006–2007), Finns were able to write freely on the following themes:

- Politics in the family and home region
- Possibilities for social or political action during different period
- Voting and candidates
- Gender and power
- Youth and politics
- Political parties, power and challenges to politics
- Politics, regionalism and civil society

Each theme had several questions, but the writers were free to leave out any questions. The 203 respondents (128 women, 75 men) sent a total of 2,333 pages to the archive. The youngest narrator was born in 1986, the oldest in 1914, but the most commonly the respondent was born in the 1920s to the 1940s.

9. In the "Living at Borderlands" collection campaign (2010), Finns were able to write freely on the following themes:

- The way of life and traditions at borders (past and present)
- Borderlands in the eyes of children and young people
- Dwelling, working, school, going to and studying at borders
- Fears concerning the national borders
- Local perspectives on wartime
- Nature in borderlands
- Trespassing and crimes at borders
- Importing groceries and goods
- Language questions at borders

The collection was organized in a relatively short period (1 April to 30 September 2010). Altogether 36 people (22 women and 14 men) participated in the collection and sent 261 pages of text. The age of

the writers varies between 50 and 91. Thus, over half of the participants were born in the 1930s to the 1950s.

10. James Wertsch (2000) has examined the production of narratives in terms of cultural tools by studying how (national history) narratives exist in dialogic relationships with one another, especially official, state-sponsored presentation of the events surrounding the Russian Civil War of 1918–1920 in the production of post-Soviet Russian history textbooks. According to Wertsch (2000: 516): “narratives do not exist in isolation and do not serve as neutral interpretive instruments. Instead, they are embedded in concrete discourse characterized by dialogic and rhetorical processes and introduce an interested – and constraining – perspective”.
11. Josif Stalin was a leader of the Soviet Union during and after the WWII. The example is from the “Everyday life at Borders” collection (SKS, KRA, Rajaseudun elämää, 2010).

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Design Poiesis: An Inquiry on Outcomes in the Use of Method and Methodology

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Design 'poiesis' transcends its meaning in design practice and research engagement through the process of creative, critical, and consequential thinking. Design is discussed in this narrative within the parameters of concept, context and communication in the practice of interior architecture. In the study of the built environment, interior architecture is the intersection of two fields – interior design and architecture. *Poiesis*, etymologically derived from Ancient Greek, conveys "to make or to transform, a process of reconciling thought with matter and time, or man with his world" (*The Free Dictionary*: s.v. 'poiesis'). Martin Heidegger also uses the term to articulate the "bringing-forth", as in the presentation of knowledge. His use of the word parallels that of his habitual reference to the term *Dasein* or 'being there', which denotes a viewpoint or perspective (Stokes 2010: 123).

Design has no single definition that is parallel to that of literature and the arts, music and theater, and crafts and manufactured products. Design exists significantly everywhere (Hauffe 1998) and permeates our everyday world through food, fashion, habitat, and our new dependency on information technology. Indeed, design was in a realm of its own in the early 20th century, but can no longer remain isolated in the same manner (Heskett 2002; Buchanan 2001; Jones 2009: 77; Julier 2005: 72).

It is believed that applied art emanated from the development of autonomous art during the industrial revolution of the early 20th century. The terms 'design' and 'designers' were widely used only in the second half of the last century in allusion to the "creators of form" (Polster et al. 2004: 6; Clark & Brody 2009: 293). Likewise, design scholars also emerged from the discipline of art history (Hauffe 1998: 7). Design studies eventually evolved into a discipline of its

own, with the scholars' standpoints significantly borrowed from material culture studies and the social sciences.

In a recent examination of the multiple responses on the relevance of research in American design education (Manfra 2005), the results of which appeared in the popular design magazine *Metropolis*, 65% of college department chairs stated that research is integrated and required in their curriculum. About 81% of designers in the professional practice claimed that they are regularly engaged in research. Further, out of the nineteen research topics in the survey, the three major interests ranked by both faculty and practicing designers were sustainability, materials, and design methodologies. The revelation of design methodology being the third most popular topic in creative research sparked the present inquiry into the subject, particularly the designers' interpretation and application of the terminology. This paper also intends to increase awareness of the fact that interior architecture applies strategic research approaches guided by the use of method and methodology, and has thereby evolved into a science of the built environment (Poldma 2009: 272).

Given this premise, this narrative seeks to investigate the creative process within the design-oriented journey of the identification of the problem, the search for inspiration, and the exploration of alternatives established by a method or methodology. The subsequent articulation of potential outcomes – like a tangible design solution – is reflected either in a spatial design or a research paper. The objectives of this paper are all interconnected by a cluster of questions. First, is design in interior architecture in a realm of its own when it involves the three dimensions of creative, critical, and consequential thinking processes, and are these processes defined by certain methods or methodologies? Secondly,

if design is about making sense of things through a particular thought process, are the results derived from a specific creative approach or by critical inquiry? Are the outcomes consequentially informed by index criteria, or the use of evidence-based structure and so forth? Thirdly, should the method or methodology useful in the creative process be influenced by humanities or social sciences? What about in critical inquiry or in consequential thought processes? Fourth, which of the two (method or methodology) is more widely used in design or directed towards the creative process and critical thinking? Which of the two is more results-oriented or process-oriented? Fifth, should one employ a methodological holism or a methodological individualism in the creative approach? Which is more focused on particularity or generality? Lastly, how essential is the theory in the method or methodology as one frames the context of inquiry, structures the objectives, gathers the data, and delivers the intended results? The framing of all these questions reflects the author's view that there is still more to learn about the function of methods and methodologies as employed in the interior architecture discipline. It is more than just the plain intersection of theory and practice or the fusion of concept and context that generates results. Oftentimes, we not only undermine the significance of design strategies, we also decimate the value of decisions made behind a particular thought process. Likewise, we continue to ignore the complexity of the design process that occurs between the creative approach, critical inquiry, and the integrity of consequential reasoning.

Methodology

Interior architecture is a complex discipline of the late 20th century that has evolved to resolve various specific needs of humanity in relation to its immediate environment (Heskett 2002; Coles & House 2007), which includes the typologies of spaces for living, working or playing. The discipline as it developed over time demands consideration of many significant facets of the users' health, welfare and safety. As we explore the realm of design *poiesis* in the interior architecture

practice, the complex needs of mankind are challenged by a plethora of distinct requirements and considerations; these present equally diverse nuances that can be addressed with the appropriate use of method or methodology. The questions and issues in this paper were elucidated by an extensive review of design literature on the subject. Research directions and recommendations by design educators and practitioners were compared and contrasted in the process. The analyses and syntheses were undertaken with the adaptation of methodological holism (Bothamley 2002: 343), complemented by the intention of mapping the facts and structures of the subject. As such, the discussion has been divided into six parts: the realm of design, dimensions of creative practice and research engagement, comparison to humanities and social sciences, design outcomes from the use of method and methodology, multiple dichotomies in the design process, and the functional role of theory.

As part of an extensive inquiry into the application of method and methodology to interior architecture, the following attempts to illuminate several of the questions posed earlier.

Realm of Design

The comprehensive review of the established frameworks of design indicates that there are at least two common realms of inquiry (Rowe 1987: 153). One realm points to interior architecture as an inference of man's interpretative relationship with his spatial world. This is validated by the activities and events that occur within man's given space. Specialized literature like in psychology and social studies argue for the correlation of thoughts, actions and feelings to room configurations, and through the natural expression of the placement objects and furniture. This is further manifested by the appropriate selection of materials and the choice of construction and fabrication methods using them. The other realm is the intrinsic interconnection of various elements within the interior architecture itself. The philosophy of interior space has always been subsumed in the larger spectrum of

architecture and structural design (Abercrombie 1990). Studies assert that the character of the interior can be construed by the volume of the enclosed envelope or space, the number of fenestrations (as in doors and windows), and the multiple geometries that legitimize the functional needs and desirable wants of the people inhabiting their spaces. In both realms, we focus on “grounding the meaning” (Rowe 1987: 154), as we express the sense of place and the sense of being. Method and methodology can further elucidate both of these in manifold ways and in more meaningful dimensions. The interior of the built environment signifies several human dimensions that extend to the organizational, physiological, social, psychological and cultural representations (Malnar & Vodvarka 1992). It is essential that, as we investigate both realms, we identify issues and solutions within a defined premise of rationality.

The field of interior architecture is a complex layer of activities with the locus of serving and satisfying the needs of humanity (Coles & House 2007: 170). The creation of inhabited spaces needs not only to be addressed in terms of pragmatic strategies. Spatial articulation is related to systems that can define individual performance or that can establish interdependent units that propose organizational structures (Heskett 2002). We need to be mindful that we are designing and ‘bringing-forth’ an interior environment, not only for the expression of human comfort and for the attainment of performance productivity, but also for the sensual satisfaction of the spatial experience. As the design of interior architecture is woven with society’s patterns of living, there is a need to generate the many facets of utility and significance within spaces. There should be an understanding that objects have intended messages or communicated metaphors for interconnection and interaction; Galen Cranz (2000: 23) states that chairs in ancient times symbolized the relationship of power and supremacy between the ruler and the common people. In contemporary times, we purchase furniture to symbolize our hedonist lifestyles or otherwise imply our small town-contentment. The choice of furnishings also

decodes particular constructed identities or nurtured qualities of an individual or of collective users.

Literature about design has taken multifarious shifts and contexts since the 1980s. These are manifested through the varied and divergent discussions on product aesthetics and consumerism, on feminist perspectives and ethical practices, and on the business of professional services and sustainable initiatives (Whiteley 1993). Such manifestations can be illustrated by the ambient use of color and light to intensify commodity aesthetics and increase consumption patterns; by the transitions of kitchen design from feminine allusions to non-gender-specific features; and in the increasing sensitivity in the use of non-renewable materials and development of post-consumer materials for product design and furniture. As design transforms its realm to cope with the major transitions in society and technology, so the creative, critical, and consequential thinking processes that are linked with design problem-solving evolve in parallel motion. The inspiration and significant intentions take shape and direction from an established method or set of strategies embodied in a larger methodology. In Lynch’s concept of mapping the environment, one method defines the ‘paths’ and ‘nodes’ along with other elements known as edges, districts and landmarks. Paths represent channels of movement while the nodes connote the areas of intense activity (McGowan & Kruse 2004: 25). Contextually, a designer needs to sensitively weigh the relationships of elements in space planning for the intended users. In contrast, if the space is a historic property, the plethora of tasks connected to historic preservation methodology will include “identification, documentation, recordation, designation and protection” (McGowan & Kruse 2004: 35). Both method and methodology are rich in theoretical constructs that informs a focused strategy to create design solutions, reflect on many design issues, and provide a holistic reassessment of the interior environment’s *raison d’etre*.

Dimensions of Creative Practice and Research Engagement

Within the multiple layers of activity in interior architecture, the strategy of identifying the design problem is crucial. The intentions associated with the problem need to be clear and connected, the thought process and design engagement must be complete and comprehensive, and the adapted procedural approaches should provide relevancy and rationality (Margolin 1995a; Poldma 2009; Papanek 1995; Rowe 1987). The four aspects – users, function, activities and relationships – are at the core of considerations in interior architecture planning. In cultural anthropology, we examine parallel factors known as human societies, language and gestural expressions, social practices, politics of representation and patterns of authority (Kuper & Kuper 1996: 156) in order to distinguish ethnicities, while in the field of cognitive psychology, we investigate similar indicators to determine the rational, behavioral and reflective circumstances that establish multiple conclusions (Ktz 2006: 382). In the creative process, we attempt to make sense of things: while engaging in critical thought, we seek definitive answers to an inquiry on the subject matter. However, readers of Gilles Deleuze's writings will acknowledge the postulate that "to think is to create and that other means of creation do not exist" (Grosz 2001: 56). Distinctions between creative and critical thinking somehow exist and can be explained further in the many variants of the design process for the interior environment. In the linear process of design, which goes through various "stages of inspiration, identification, conceptualization, exploration and refinement, definition and modeling, communication, production" (Aspelund 2010: 1; Box 2007: 82), some could simply choose to evolve or conclude within the inspirational stage and consider the end result as simply one's imaginative act of creation (Aspelund 2010: 18). Clear examples of this occur in flimsily designed spaces that show insubstantial connections to the tenets of utilitarian functionality, but which nevertheless can be considered a pleasurable installation, which lends character to the space (see Figure 1).

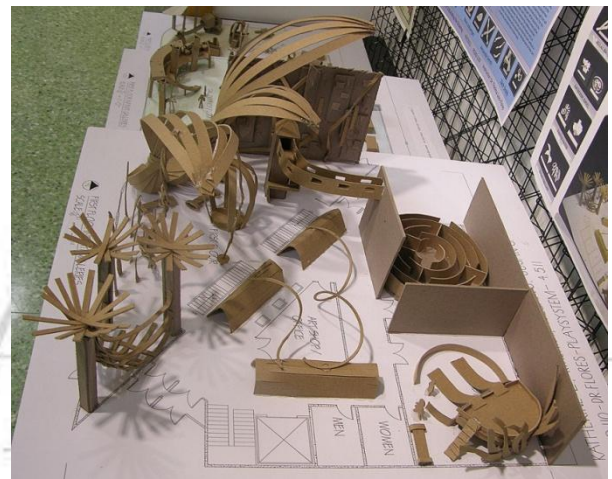
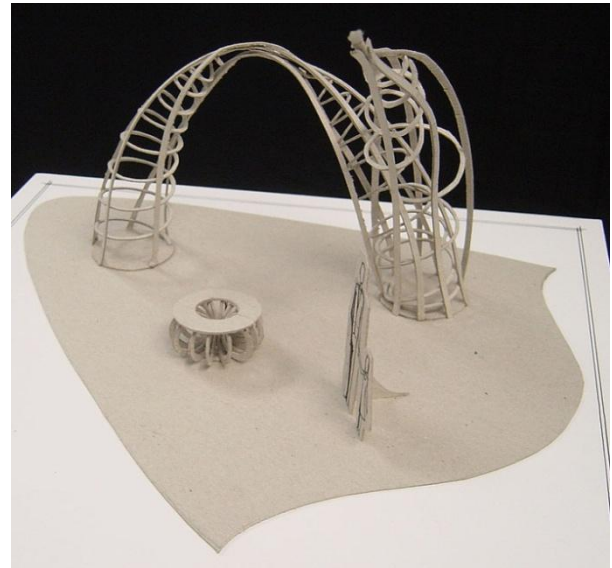


Figure 1a–b. Some Conceptual Outcomes Using a Method of Imaginative Inquiry (Image credits from Design Fundamental Cohorts 2010 and 2011, and Studio 2 Cohort of 2008).

The other stages previously stated are defined by a strategy that establishes a procedural approach (Rowe 1987) or a process of engagement (Dohr & Portillo 2011), both having a closer connection to the context of methodology. In the procedural approach to design thinking, the problem needs to be well-defined, specifically clarifying the essence of goals, as well as the means and directions to pursue the outcomes and solutions. Oftentimes, the linear approach in space planning indicates a direct approach to size and scale by enhancing volumetric features. This approach parallels the idea in logistical economics where we treat prevalent constraints with the equation of maximum values at minimal costs (Bothamley 2002: 314). On the other hand, a procedural

approach follows more technical or sequential phases that break down into facts, goals, needs and other issues. A number of doctrines or theories which are also referred to as 'singular methods' are linked to the premise of the procedural approach such as associationism, the Wurzburg school of thought, Gestalt psychology, and behaviorism (Rowe 1987: 39–46). In psychology, associationism is a complex mental process or connection of ideas, which creates associative links resulting in a theoretical speculation. When applied to interior architecture, it proposes the concept of simple elements placed in mechanistic adjacency, such as in the relationship of rooms, as well as the link of public and private areas. Another method in psychology, behaviorism, is corollary to the stimulus and response model that provides prevalent patterns of human behavior (Bothamley 2002: 50). In undertaking design, in addition to information on the activities required to be performed in the space, designers also need information on the frequency with which users will occupy the space (Dickinson 2009: 41), to consider the behavioral patterns in order to predicate the flow or density, and to establish the aspects of priority or hierarchy. Other concepts include the Wurzburg school of thought, where controlled tasks and purposes give direction to the thought process, while Gestalt psychology relates to the holistic principles of informational organization. In interior architecture, the value and realization of design in three dimensions, such as the engagement of self, participation in teamwork, and the interaction with place, are aspired to (Dohr & Portillo 2011: 65). This context of engagement is similar to how an idea or process takes its course in emanating from the designer, oftentimes closely associated with creative thinking. We can construe this in the way one makes design decisions parallel to the articulation of our innate knowledge, the interchange of ideas as presented in joint collaborations, and the collective adaptation of a strategy to understand a place (Bowers 2008: 42–45; Walter 1998: 215). The designer's positive attitude, respect for other people's opinions, and deeper understanding of space and place

oftentimes leads to outcomes that are successful rather than the reverse.

Interdisciplinarity is deeply encouraged in design teams, as it creates a diverse range of expertise that brings in multiple facets of knowledge and interpretations of issues. The inclusion of diverse disciplines allows the designers and their peers to execute strategies that support the social, cultural, economic, physiological and psychological dimensions of the society under review (Petroski 2006: 9; Jones 2010: 160). The design group of the Indianapolis International Airport shared that the concept of the interior lobby took inspiration from the lowland settlement patterns in the Midwest region, and the celebratory exchanges of people at the downtown plaza. Both concepts are drawn from the central place theory popularly used in geography. Outcomes from the application of the procedural approach and the extent of engagement validate the premise that design practice involves both thinking and doing. In addressing multiple issues, the foregrounding of imperatives are essential in the completion of design tasks. Information on user needs, cultural traditions and peculiarities, site and climate conditions, and available resources provides analyses and generates good syntheses in design (Goldschmidt 1983: 8). The prevalent use of indexical criteria, aims and purposes, information gathering techniques, and measurement of outcomes in the design inquiry share parallel components with those that belong to conventional research inquiry, but the former may be perceived as somehow not yet as firmly interconnected.

Parallels to Humanities and Social Sciences

The methods and methodologies in design have comparable elements to the structure of the mixed methods used in the social sciences. A number of scholars have established the connection of humanities and social sciences to design practice and research (Bowers 2008; Buchanan 2001; Roth 1999). Our perceptions of the dialectics of the inside and outside, and the binary oppositions that exist in feminine and masculine, diversity and globalization, natural and artificial, territoriality and temporality are all evident in

socio-cultural and historical studies that present us with new meanings to interpret and process for design. One way to illustrate this is the development of a method embodied in the “social logic of space” (Hillier & Hanson 1984: 82). The combined framework consists of Hillier’s ‘spatial syntax’ for the syntactic interpretation and generation of graphic descriptions. The syntax consists of cells representing nodes of spaces or experiential events. Such nodes are connected by links to show relations and interpreted with a method called ‘gamma analysis’, developed by Julienne Hanson (Hillier & Hanson 2006: 148; 1984: 147–148). This method is used in the analysis and planning of spatial units from small habitats and building genotypes to large commercial spaces as in airports. The concept was derived from combined evidences used in the analysis of settlement patterns by anthropologists and the creation of axial maps in quantitative geography. The term ‘methodological’ is more associated with the philosophical fields known as behaviorism, holism, and individualism, among others (Bothamley 2002: 342). These three fields are significantly evident in design literature of the last three decades (Groat & Wang 2002; Katz 2006), particularly the prevalent preference for holism as a philosophical stance or the inference of being holistic in the search of social constructs that define a process with significant substantiation. Due to the plethora of concerns in the design of an interior architecture, both methodological holism and individualism are adapted to deliver a design strategy. Methodological individualism is of essence to the design practice because one must be aware of the conventional and peculiar needs of individuals or users of the given space (Turpin 2010: 328). Methods employed in interior architecture planning include several systems of inquiry: occupancy evaluation methods; qualitative and quantitative approaches; information gathering and source verification; interviews, surveys and observation; and the use of a design programming document (Robinson & Parman 2010; Groat & Wang 2002). All traditional methods except the use of design-

inspired research or programming documents are covered in typical research discourse outside of the creative discipline.

Programming documents have fundamental components that establish the summary and scope of the project: a support analysis data; a business and building analysis; accounts of interviews, surveys and notes; appendices that may include the study of precedents and information from clients; and other relevant research (Poldma 2009; Nussbaumer 2009; Dickinson & Marsden 2009: 15). In the course of preparing the programming document, we identify the needs and requirements of the given client. We match our design intents and solutions with the problems determined in the process of methods analysis (Margolin 1995; Poldma 2009; Papanek 1995). In this process, designers also advise the client on which strategies are cost-effective, energy-efficient, environmentally friendly, sustainable, and sensitive to diversity, technologically appropriate, and also which historically and culturally blend into the fabric of the place, and so forth.

Oftentimes, an information index (see Figure 2) is used to review multiple details required in a programming document. The latter is quite exclusive to the practice of interior architecture and its allied disciplines of interior design and architecture, and has been proven advantageous in identifying issues and determining the requirements of users prior to the development of design (McGowan & Kruse 2004: 71).

Data collection in the research and design of interior environments is complex, as we gather facts and sources relevant to both the humanities and social sciences. For example, Nussbaumer explains at length the scope of what we collect prior to design development. She enumerates nine of these salient types of information (Nussbaumer 2009: 9–10):

- The needs and characteristics of users or clients
- The physical, structural contextual needs informed by building codes

- Facts and considerations to achieve an ecological equilibrium
- Human factors along with identifiable issues in ergonomics and anthropometrics
- Socio-economic needs as indicated in budgets and the life-cycle of a place
- The required functions and allocation of rooms in the space that denote a marketing value
- The determination of furniture, furnishing and equipment that support the functionality of the space typology as expressed in residential vs. commercial, or institutional vs. hospitality
- The diversity of users
- The historical precedents or stylistic values of the interior environment.

People engaged in design studies and design practice have emulated the illumination and exploratory strengths of the humanities and social sciences to achieve better information gathering techniques and gain deeper understanding of issues (Barnard 2001: 19). Good practices in the human factor of design as embodied in ergonomics and anthropometrics would not have emerged if the social issues of productivity, variances in human scale and body features, and public health policies had not been identified and established. Ergonomics is an applied science which looks into the design and arrangement of interior spaces and furniture for their efficient and safe use, while anthropometrics is the study of human body measurements (Slotkis 2006: 92–93). Directed by more methods and methodology, another pattern of engagement of value is “to designate the profound realization of the humanity-reality commensuration” (Borgmann 1995: 15; Squires 2009: 115). A well-designed office cubicle engages one to work effectively, efficiently and to take pride in the pleasures of its aesthetic elements. As one adapts an individualist or a holistic methodology, particularities and generalities lead in

Considerations	Goals	Needs	Problems
Time	Historic Preservation - Original brick will stay exposed to integrate old and new.	Adaptability - With a flexible plan, it will be easy to redesign this space to any needs.	
Past	Change - Company wants an updated approach to collaboration. Changing from cubicles to open space plan.	As a new firm, their old office just needed to accommodate the employees, not best represent their design styles.	The old office design of cubicles and drywall offices stifled creativity, communication and workflow.
Present	Growth - Current design should allow for future growth. Occupant Satisfaction - Everyone who works in this office should feel comfortable and at home in a modern office.	Materials - Extra attention devoted to specifying environmentally sustainable materials and finishes. Designers need a creatively stimulating environment. Owners need to oversee designers in a non-threatening way.	One bathroom in the space may become a problem with excessive growth. Although the A3 pods are very cool, they are not very conducive to space saving and create lots of dead corner space.

Considerations	Goals	Needs	Problems
Function	Mission - Create a contemporary, open office layout to meet the needs of a small graphic design firm.	Space Requirements - Reception 325 sq. ft. Cafe 90 sq. ft. Conference area 560 sq. ft. Breakout areas 225 sq. ft. Library 135 sq. ft. Server room 90 sq. ft.	
People	Maximum Number - 2 owners, 12 designers, a receptionist and approximately 4 guests at any given time. Interaction, Privacy - Individual designers need to have private spaces but the ability to easily collaborate. Owners need additional privacy.	Grouping - Designer pods are grouped together in sections, so designers can work together. The owners are incorporated into the open office plan to promote interaction between bosses and employees. Hierarchy - Owners have larger more private office spaces but are seamlessly integrated into plan.	Each person employed needs their own private space, with the ability to easily access any other employee's space and access the collaboration area. Designers need access to the orbit for creative stimulation. All people in the building need to be able to exit the building safely in an emergency.
Activities	Security - Receptionist needs to have clear line of vision to both entrances. Back exit door should be secure to employees only. Progression - Natural flow of traffic from waiting area through space. Segregation - Designers should not be segregated. Efficiency - All space should be utilized as best as possible.	The first floor needs to be able to be utilized for open houses. The conference room should double as a multi-purpose space, and include lots of display cases to showcase work. The server room needs to be secure and fairly inaccessible to guests.	
Relationships	Information Exchange - Very important for the collaborative space be effectively used by designers and owners. Should have clear paths between all designers.	Guests need to feel welcome and should be impressed with the design of the office.	The owners need to remain in command, while also fitting in with the rest of the designers, this will be a sensitive issue to address.

Considerations	Goals	Needs	Problems
Environment	Sociality - A collaborative center encourages a productive social atmosphere. Individuality - Each employee has their own space for working alone with their own tools. Encoded Direction - Adequate way finding signs throughout building to denote exits and room names. Projected Image - The visual appeal of the office will come from natural raw materials and simple, spacey contemporary furniture and office systems.	Neighbors - The office should appear to fit in with surrounding buildings and other retailers in the common building. Contractors will need to take care not to disrupt neighbors during the renovation process. Accessibility - This office needs to meet all ADA requirements. 5' turning circles in bathroom and changes of direction are crucial. All countertops must meet height requirements for wheelchair users. All pathways need to be at least 44" wide. Doorways need to be at least 3' wide.	Accessibility - With an open plan, subject to constant rearrangement, the designers and owners need to be aware of these ADA requirements so they keep them in accordance. The pods are organically shaped, so they create many angles that need to always meet corridor width requirements.
Quality	Building Quality - Renovations are being made by one of the most respected construction companies in the area. Spatial Quality - Extra attention made to personal space requirements and necessary ADA space requirements. Technical Quality - Both levels are equipped with the most recent technical innovations.	Equipment Costs - The quality of all equipment should be the primary concern - quality over quantity. The open office area needs to be secure from the reception area to ensure a quality work environment for the designers without interruptions from guests and people entering and exiting the building as well as street noise.	The cost of the Knoll A3 office systems are very high. They require all their own accessories and adaptations because of their unique shape. The cost of the systems needs to be worth it for the firm in order to be successful.
Economy	Extent of Funds - Designers and contractors are working to keep costs as low as possible without compromising quality.	Designers, contractors and firm managers need to work together to create parameters for an energy budget, operating costs and life-cycle costs.	In order to have a modern firm with impressive elements, it is expensive. The A3 equipment has a very high cost.

Figure 2. Information Index Sample (A Studio 4 Exploration by Kayla Beebe, September 2009).

variances to the actualization of the client's needs and requirements. This design practice also includes a pre-design inspection, design process review, and a post-design evaluation to mark the compelling realities surrounding the interior environment. We can equate these activities to the use of a field survey in the social sciences, where data collected present new issues, reveal key information, and elucidate common patterns and parallel circumstances which are of value in the study.

Design Outcomes from the Use of Method and Methodology

In the previous discussion, we have established the functionality of both method and methodology in the context of adapting the philosophical stances of holism and individualism in gathering facts and strategizing significant design solutions. Parallel to that inference is that in holism, we consider issues in their collective value and that match various considerations made under generality; while the individualism corresponds to the conditions of particularity. Jennifer Greene (2008: 7) explains that we employ multiple methods, which we call 'mixed methods' in social sciences, in pursuit of facts and patterns that convey both generality and particularity. The pragmatic needs of evaluators and researchers, including designers, indicate that the information gathered from the cross-disciplinary utilization of mixed methods is essential (Tasshakori & Greswll 2008: 3). Valuable data from public health, sustainability policies, behavioral psychology, and anthropological demography are integrated in healthcare facility design.

In the context of interior architecture, mixed methodology is more essential than the singular method since the former allows one to conduct the research programming and design process with the plurality of strategies, and the relevant results addressed therein. This viewpoint is validated by two widely-used design structures which employ mixed methods: evidence-based criteria (Nussbaumer 2009) and the information index, which was explained above. Evidence-based research consists of searching for and locating new evidence and applying this new information in the design process. All these design research constructs or indices provide a designer with methods that can generate various outcomes (Heskett 2002); allow one to set the relevant goals, explore various routes, and involve participants in the process (Hubbard 1996; Harbison 1997); and also measure results (Phillips 2004). Both actually fit into a research-inspired design framework (Robinson & Parman 2010). Further, design

frameworks construe the realms of creative thinking and critical inquiry through manifold formats which are associated with the widely known researches in interpretive history, qualitative, experimental, correlational, simulation, logical argumentation, case study and multi-method approaches (Groat & Wang 2002: vi). The design ideation moves forward with the consideration of given imperatives such as needs, culture, interior space and resources. The analysis of gathered information will direct the mission, objectives, goals, concept, performance requirements, projected results and so forth (see Figure 3). Mixed methods in design will facilitate the structure of elements and information, apply data from the structure into concepts, and critically reflect on concepts as we contextualize all stages of the process. All these have an inference in the quality of stratified objectives and achieved results. The substantial plethora of results comes from an essential checklist of considerations as embodied in a design or innovative project brief. Herein, the common components integrated are the project overview and background; category review, which means a particular industry served by the interior environment; target users; portfolio profile of the company; objectives and promotional strategies of the business; scope, timeline, budget and operations involved; and available research data (Phillips 2004: 29). The design of a residential loft for a select target group need adequate information on the geo-demographics and lifestyle clusters of prospective users to address a wider spectrum of buyers.

Multiple Dichotomies in the Design Process

It is explicit that both the design process and the investigation and assumptions of various binaries in form and function or in the dichotomies of concept and context rest upon the use of methodology, a cluster of concepts, ideas, theories and approaches. The plurality of methods that inspire a process allows one to comprehend and interpret facts, socio-cultural phenomena, and the interdependency

energize. activate. invigorate.

The purpose of the Applied Technology building is to accommodate students and faculty with a learning facility that promotes wellness. The goal of the building is to create an engaging environment while providing sustainable benefits to the university. This is accomplished by replacing less vibrant spaces with a vibrant interior courtyard. With nature as an inspiration, the space includes a water feature, trees, and greenery that creates the essence of the room. The space provides a vastly different learning experience. The courtyard extends through the second floor revealing the organic nature of the skylights above. The surrounding classrooms and offices have adjacent windows that allow natural light in from the courtyard. To create a healthier environment, air ventilation and quality will be improved with the use of new technological advances. While considering the life span and expectancy of the building, materials, lighting sensors, and other conservation techniques are considered to create a sustainable environment.

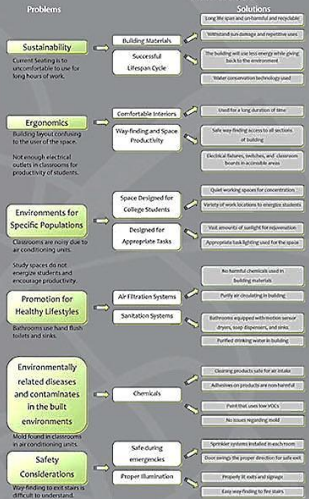
original floor plan.



performance requirements.

The ASIO student competition requires students to design a new or existing building based on the integration of wellness to create a healthy living and working environment. Students need to determine the issues of the building and what activities are done within the space. The goal is to create a design solution that makes the building healthy based on the psychological, physical, and economical needs. The design needs to be a creative forward thinking approach that makes the building sustainable and also follows ADA regulations. Design concepts need to be delivered using visual and written communication and presentation.

inspiration.



proposed floor plan.

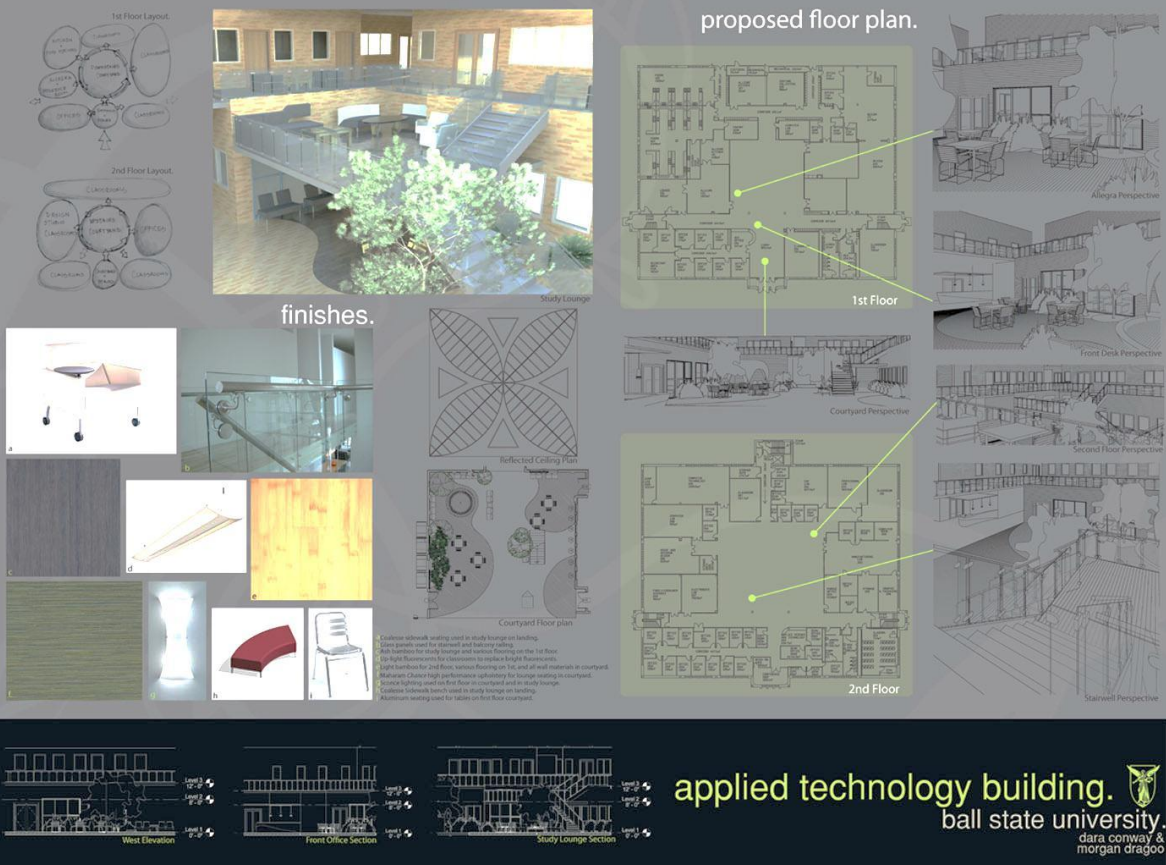


Figure 3. A Design Outcome Using a Methodological Framework (Image credits: Studio 3 Project of M. Dragoo and D. Conway 2010).

of parts and components to make sense of the whole (Bowers 2008: 41). Each exploration of visual components is associated with many choices – for example, whether interpretations should be literal or symbolic; whether the object should be geometric or organic, whether the public space should dominate the private space; or whether visual weight should matter over balance, and so forth. A relevant framework of design addresses six aspects of knowledge that present many dichotomies or binaries that support or define our decision-making process. From design conception to construction, we search for information on purpose, people and presence, process, project and practice (Phillips 2004: 115) which presents measurable results and perceivable qualities. We translate these domains in interior architecture with various styles and preferences. We demarcate spaces to represent needs against wants; create images to mark short or long-term competitive edges; emphasize materials that support regular or maximum performance requirements; and enhance individualistic attitudes or collective motivations and purposes among others. Numerous articles agree on the context of design embracing the issues of sensibility, aesthetics and sensitivity (Poldma 2009: 259; Katz 2006; Roth 1999; Whiteley 1993). The values and results may not significantly vary even if we choose to apply dominantly one direction of creative approach, critical inquiry, and consequential thinking process. All methods and methodologies must explicitly or implicitly address the interior environment's function for the long-term concerns of users; embrace ethical modes and initiatives to improve the well-being of users; and assist them in achieving an optimum ecological equilibrium (Dilnot 2009: 183; Hubbard 1996: 18). Nonetheless, whatever approach is taken, the thought process will lead to multiple acts of exploring and experimenting, and discovering and determining wherein the convergent and divergent issues will elucidate each other.

The Role of Theory

The application of theories in design projects gives credence to the proposed or arrived at solutions. Some common examples of theory

used in interior architecture include Gestalt psychology, functionalism, ecosystems model, symbolic interaction, change theory, person-environment theory, place identity (Nussbaumer 2009: 20–34). Design is a process in which we create and send forms of communication to a recipient. Communication is a science, while interior architecture is an applied science where many dualisms co-exist in the planning decisions as shown in the Gestalt psychology. We might ask if we want a unified set of elements as an alternative to the cluster of fragmented parts, or do we connect areas in similarity or proximity to form a cohesive whole. The other theories mentioned also clarify interior architecture as we explain how functions are expressed or intended to define a social whole: understand the interdependence of species and spaces; visualize the synthetic method of conventions and representations in the creative *poiesis* of planning; prepare for transitions brought about by economy and technology; achieve ecological equilibrium within the comfort and performance index; and reveal the sense of being embodied in the sense of space and place. Theory establishes and regulates the messages we intend to communicate and receive. Designers have taken several lenses of interpretation in the use of anthropological, ethical, feminist, Marxist, psychoanalytical, and semiotic views (Bowers 2008: 19). Design development also employs cutting-edge approaches by adapting the theories of modernism and postmodernism, which include semiotics to structuralism, post-structuralism and deconstruction, and so forth.

In essence, a theory resolves multiple uncertainties and conflicts within its set of rules, types, systems and orders that demarcate our tacit and explicit knowledge. Moreover, the theory allows one to discern the particularity and generality of judgments, the generative and cumulative processes, and the commonalities and variances in socio-cultural concerns and economic patterns (Schon 2009: 110–111). In a typical methodological construct, a philosophy frames the theory, the theory informs the strategy, and the strategy sets the specific techniques or approaches, which by

consequence makes the theory intimately attached to the techniques. Theory has an important niche in the design of interior environments. Theory offers the paradigms of orders which can also be adapted and repeated by others. Theory informs the user of a structure for analysis and feedback (Nussbaumer 2009: 10; Taylor & Preston 2006: 6). The absence of a theoretical lens brings a plethora of preferences and prejudices in the design process, and oftentimes also illustrates the biases in design decisions. Jennifer Bothamley (2002: vii) points that theory in art or in the technical subject like design for instance is already embodied in the discipline “where the principles or methods may be distinct from the practice of it”.

The body of knowledge that builds into an understanding of method or methodology can sometimes be discerned by verifying whether someone was reading intensely in theory or just reading widely (Barry 1995: 4). Not all designers acknowledge the significance of theory due to the fact that some undergraduate design programs undermine its intellectual value for design. Oftentimes, a prevalent nuance in design discourse surrounding old schools of creative practice leads us to question the relevance of theory to method, like provoking the act of designing in relation to research (Groat & Wang 2002). The multiple understandings of theory over the last century have changed many design perspectives (Clark & Brody 2009: 70). It is apparent that a distinct difference between generative research and analytical research occurs due to the judgment and valuation of the facts therein. In context, the end-results may present outcomes that manifest the domain of philosophical assumption, inquiry logic, grounded visualization, and socio-political commitment (Greene 2008; Bucsescu & Eng 2009). All these make design thinking a synthetic approach that unites “parts to the whole and vice versa” (Hubbard 1996: 108). Intentions in design are interdependent and function in two directions, one where ‘parts’ matter more – as we see fit for larger interior environments, and the other from the ‘whole to the parts’, when a

marketing strategy is essential to driving the entire process.

Design thinking is an inquiry that engages one to probe issues and resolve problems (Poldma 2009: 19), while critical thinking is associated as a reflective thought process that directs consequential reasoning (Bucsescu & Eng 2009: 2). The creative process, on the other hand, is an imaginative act of making, an act of inventing from nothing, or the notion of Edward de Bono’s concept of lateral or metaphoric thinking, which is evidently applied in philosophy, art and literary criticism, or linguistics and philology. Design engagement is enriched by the theoretical lenses from the humanities and social sciences. Methods and methodologies take inspiration from across disciplines, as shown in the contextual understanding of population and resources, business concentration and ecology for interior planning as illuminated in geography. The concepts of center and periphery or privacy and public spheres in interior spaces are informed by sociology. Further, frames of dual economy, exchange, hierarchy and social networks as clarified in anthropology are applied in the appropriation of spaces. All generate new ways of seeing and observing things, of posing new directions in challenging given assumptions and preconditions, and of contextualizing unprecedented taxonomies essential in design.

Conclusion

Within our contemporary practice of interior architecture, it is important and imperative for design to be both research-inspired and practice-based. The design inquiry can take several pathways, applying multiple structures from the social sciences and humanities. The theory in method and methodology will remain as an active contemplation within the modes of understanding the relationships of facts and principles, sensing phenomena, expanding imagination, or facilitating a design development. The theory presents a logical organization of ideas that clarifies the facts and observations, and significantly informs and integrates the process towards a method or methodology. Methods and methodologies will requisitely provide the systematic approach to design within the

rigors of process, philosophy and scientific frameworks. In summary, design *poiesis* needs both the structure of method and methodology to define new paradigms, introduce innovations, and carry out creative and intelligent solutions that befittingly link humanity with the interior environment.

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Younger Icelandic Manuscripts and Old Norse Studies

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This paper considers methodologies of working with younger Icelandic manuscripts in retrospective contexts. It begins by outlining reasons younger (a term I use synonymously with 'late') manuscripts may have been rejected as useful sources in the past and why they are gaining greater acceptance. It moves on to discuss the main methods associated with philology and outlines the methodologies of Traditional and Material ('Old' and 'New') Philology. The reconstruction of the Prologue of *Edda*, a 13th century Icelandic poetic treatise attributed to Snorri Sturluson (*Snorra Edda* hereafter), is then discussed in the light of these methodologies. The younger manuscript as record of a reading culture is then briefly outlined, followed by a consideration of compositional resources and diachronic studies. I close with a discussion of material in the *fornaldarsögur* ['sagas of ancient times'] (a saga subgenre with roots in oral traditions and but that was written down well into the period when other kinds of sagas had already been committed to vellum). Using these examples, my discussion demonstrates that we must be open to both methodologies

of New and Old Philology when working with retrospective methods in order to get as much out of younger manuscripts/material as possible.

Scholars working with retrospective methods in the field of medieval studies must consider with great care the nature of the transmission and preservation of the late sources that they work with, and by extension the physical documents that preserve the textual sources (for an example of this done well, see Fisher, this volume). There are several reasons a source can be considered as 'late', and all reasons are relative. For my purposes, 'late(r)' or 'young(er)' manuscripts are those that have a paper rather than vellum support, since vellum was used before the transition to paper in the 16th and 17th centuries in Iceland. 'Late' manuscripts can also be those that date from the post-Reformation (and thus post-Medieval) period. There may be a significant gap between vellum and paper manuscripts of a saga due to issues of durability: paper is much less durable than vellum, and the older paper manuscripts may not survive as well. Defining a 'late text' is more complex. On the

one hand, a ‘late text’ can literally mean a saga that was composed in the post-Reformation period, and thus the term ‘late’ differentiates the saga from those composed in medieval times. On the other hand, I use the term ‘text’ to designate each unique recording of a saga, thus every saga is also a text. Furthermore, because I view each recording as unique, I have not used a firm distinction between ‘late material’ and ‘late manuscripts’. Thus, a version of a saga (text) recorded in a late manuscript is late material from my perspective, even if it is a version of a very old text (the first recorded version of that saga). I have also considered the *fornaldarsögur* as ‘late’ from the perspective of retrospective studies of Old Norse pre-Christian religion, since they purport to record beliefs and rituals from pre-Christian belief even though the majority of the sagas are extant in manuscripts dating from the 15th century onwards. Despite the fact that some *fornaldarsögur* are known to have existed very early,¹ there is still a large gap between the writing down of the material and the actual time period in which the beliefs we hope to recover were held. We must rely on oral tradition to transmit these traditions, and they did so probably in fluid configurations, some of which made their way into writing. These various uses of the term ‘text’ and the relative term ‘late’ can coincide, particularly when dealing with the *fornaldarsögur*, which for the most part are late texts in late manuscripts (see below). As Frog (this volume) addresses, this kind of material can offer us information about traditions if we ask appropriate questions of it.

Those working retrospectively with younger sources must also be clear about the impact of their methodological choices on their research question (for a thorough discussion, see Peterson-Lewis, this volume). In this paper, I demonstrate the value of younger material to a discussion of Old Norse-Icelandic literature and culture from the perspective of manuscript studies. My purpose in doing this is to open a dialogue between the methodologies of Old and New Philology in the context of retrospective studies that use manuscripts. New Philology, more concerned with the synchronic aspects

of manuscript material, is more accepting of the value of younger material than the Old Philology. However, when younger material is used in a retrospective context, the diachronic perspective brought to the table by Old Philology is crucial to open up the link between the younger material and its past: the focus on manuscripts and variants must to some extent be underwritten by traditional philology (cf. Drout & Kleinman 2010). Whilst by using retrospective methods, information pertinent to Old Norse culture can be gleaned from younger manuscripts, this ought to be done with the recognition that post-medieval manuscripts are fascinating and valuable objects of study in their own right. Only through this balancing act of appreciating both the synchronic and diachronic aspects of younger manuscripts can we gain maximum benefit in including younger manuscripts in the arena of Old Norse studies as a whole.

To Reject or Embrace Younger Manuscripts?

Historically, the study of Old Norse shows two quite different attitudes to the use of younger manuscripts, depending on the methodological approach taken to the discipline. Traditionally, many Old Norse philologists have dismissed young manuscripts of texts as worthless in favour of older manuscripts, preferably vellum, for several reasons. Firstly, this is because younger manuscripts are often deemed to be unhelpful in the reconstruction of an archetypal text: since younger manuscripts are more likely to be copies, the texts they offer are not of independent value (see Haugen 1990: 148–149 and references in that chapter). The extremely productive Icelandic editor Finnur Jónsson (1886–1888: xxix) notoriously often did not even bother to examine younger manuscripts, as he dismissed them out of hand as “uden nogen som helst selvstændig verdi” [‘without any form of independent value at all’]. Secondly, it has been assumed that later Icelandic texts and manuscripts cannot accurately reflect earlier oral traditions, and thus are of little or no source value for Old Norse culture or literature. Thirdly, historians of Old Norse-

Icelandic literature have likewise dismissed later Icelandic texts, and by implication the manuscripts that contain them, as products of a decline from the golden age of saga writing that produced the *Íslendingasögur* ['sagas of the Icelanders'] (in the 13th century to the mid-14th century) (Mitchell 1991: 8, 39–49) to the later *fornaldarsögur* and *lygisögur* ['lying sagas'] that were popular from the Middle Ages well into post-Reformation times in Iceland. These types of sagas that are obviously highly fantastic were felt by earlier generations of scholars to be unoriginal, trivial and bad literature (e.g. Stefán Einarsson 1957: 169).

Many avenues of research in Old Norse studies have, however, clearly demonstrated the need to take younger manuscripts into consideration, and happily the disdain once felt for younger (paper) manuscripts and their contents is changing. One reason for this is that the field of 'New' or 'Material' Philology has steadily been growing. This philological methodology encourages a growing acceptance of paper manuscripts on the grounds that each manuscript is valuable in its own right as an individual reflection of the milieu, social processes and people (commissioners, compilers, scribes and readers) that produced it, as well as documenting a version of a text. In addition, following the days of Finnur Jónsson's mammoth editing projects (see Goeres, this volume), it has been recognised that paper manuscripts can be of use in editing medieval texts, not only for reconstructive purposes but also because they can contain interesting later recensions of texts. Added to this is an ever growing appreciation of the literary and entertainment qualities of the *fornaldarsögur* and the Icelandic romance genres (the Icelandic *riddarasögur* ['sagas of knights'], and the *lygisögur*), which tend to be younger than the more respected *Íslendingasögur* and *konungasögur* ['sagas of kings'] genres and, although each saga is usually preserved in a few earlier vellum manuscripts, most of the extant manuscripts are paper.

'Old' and 'New' Philology

The study of manuscripts and their contents is undertaken using philological methods.

'Philology' is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the branch of knowledge that deals with the historical, linguistic, interpretative, and critical aspects of literature" (s.v. 'philology, n.'). Sonja Peterson-Lewis (this volume) has underlined the importance of distinguishing 'methods' from 'methodology': the performance of philological analysis uses methods, most famously the 'genealogical' or 'stemmatic' method of determining manuscript family trees (outlined in, for example, Haugen 1990, 2004; Greetham 1994: 323–325); whether one attaches 'Old' or 'New' in front of Philology indicates the methodological stance.

To generalise, philologists working in the 'Old' or 'traditional' methodological tradition may have little time for younger manuscripts and their contents because their concern is to extract one 'best' text from many manuscript versions, preferably one that comes the closest to the 'original' of the text as possible. To do this, they use the genealogical method developed in earnest in the 1800s in the philological circle around Karl Lachmann (1793–1851) (Haugen 2004: 85). The principles established during the development of the genealogical method are summarised by Odd Einar Haugen (2004: 85–88) thus:

1. A sharp divide was made between 'recension' (manuscript analysis) and 'emendation' (improvement of the text), and the act of recension was developed in the direction of a systematic discipline.
2. The transmission of the text was reconstructed in a genealogical model that led the manuscripts back to a common archetype.
3. Clear criteria were developed in order to choose between readings on the basis of the archetype.

The first step of the recension process

er å luke ut usjølvtendige handskrifter, dvs. dei handskriftene som må reknast som reine avskrifter av andre kjende handskrifter og såleis ikkje kan gje nye opplysningar om arketypen.

is to weed out manuscripts that are not independent, that is to say those manuscripts that must be reckoned as plain copies of other known manuscripts and that thus

cannot give new information about the archetype. (Haugen 2004: 86.)

It is easy to see how this often entails the rejection of younger manuscripts, because their texts are more likely to be copies.

The 'New' or 'Material' Philology is a development in philological studies that presupposes that each individual manuscript and the texts therein have their own unique qualities deserving of study. New Philology has aided in reintegrating younger manuscripts into the fields of Old Norse literary and manuscript studies.² Studies of manuscripts that take a New Philological standpoint are interested in 'variance' as central to medieval texts and that the Old Philological tradition of removing (editing out) this variance by reconstructing a text is to deny the essence of medieval literature.³ Whilst from a methodological point of view, New Philology's research priorities certainly place more emphasis on younger manuscripts than traditional philology, it is not the claim of New Philology that each manuscript of a text is equally 'good' from a text-critical point of view, but rather:

all manuscripts of a given work are equally interesting (potentially at least), not for establishing the text, separating 'good' readings from 'bad' – which is not what 'new' philology seeks to do – but rather for what they can tell us about the processes of literary production, dissemination and reception to which they are witnesses. (Driscoll 2010: 91–92.)

Those working with the 'New' Philological methodology are more likely, therefore, to produce studies or editions of single manuscripts or editions of a text that present all the surviving manuscript versions; a mild form of this is presenting in an apparatus the most 'important' variations from many manuscripts on one text that is presented in full; at its most extreme, each manuscript version of a text is presented side by side or published separately.

It is not impossible to work with both methodologies;⁴ students should be taught about both methodologies and about the range of methods available, so that they are able to make a fully informed choice about which

methodologies and methods to employ in order to answer their research questions (see Peterson-Lewis, this volume). Indeed, in a retrospective context, the approaches of Old and New Philology can be complementary if one is prepared to negotiate between the two methodologies.

Younger Manuscripts and Editing Texts (Snorra Edda)

Even if they do not embrace a strictly material philological viewpoint, paper manuscripts have still been used by those working more in the Old Philological vein for both editing and reconstructing medieval texts retrospectively. Recent editorial traditions of *Snorra Edda* can be used as an example to document both of these uses to which younger manuscripts have been put.

As is widely known, the four manuscripts of *Snorra Edda* believed to have independent textual value are manuscripts RTWU,⁵ with R usually serving as the base and 'best' text for editions. RWU are all medieval, vellum texts, but T is a paper manuscript believed to be a copy of a medieval exemplar no longer extant. R and T are most similar, W shows more differences than T to R, and U is the most different, concise almost to the point of nonsense in places (for a full account of the variants between RTWU, see the introduction to the standard edition of manuscript T in Eeden 1913). In editions other than those of the individual manuscripts, TWU are typically taken into consideration to provide important corrections and variants for R, which is usually selected as the 'best' text of the first part of *Snorra Edda* known as *Gylfaginning*. In the recent editorial work by Anthony Faulkes on *Snorra Edda*, focus has been on establishing the 'best' text for his edition. This has been done by choosing R as the most reliable manuscript and emending it with variant readings from TWU in *Gylfaginning* (see Faulkes 1982) or by using several younger manuscripts to reconstruct the first leaf of R (Faulkes 1979a). In terms of *Snorra Edda* as a whole, he comments:

On the whole it seems best to admit that the manuscripts preserve various compilations based on the lost work of Snorri Sturluson,

each of which has its own interest and value.
(Faulkes 1982: xxxi.)

Although the editorial policy is geared towards the production of one text of the Prologue, Faulkes does acknowledge that each individual manuscript has its own unique qualities, and this is an important tenet of ‘New’ or ‘Material’ Philology, despite the Prologue text as a whole being presented from the standpoint of Old Philology.

Parts of the Prologue to *Snorra Edda* are preserved in RTWU. All these, however, have been held defective in some way: the beginning is missing from RT (a leaf is missing from R and it seems that the scribe of T could not read the beginning of his exemplar (Faulkes 1979a: 204)). In U, in keeping with the rest of the *Snorra Edda* text in this manuscript, the prologue seems to be much condensed, whereas the version of the Prologue in W has several interpolations of classical and biblical material in a style that is not thought to chime well with the rest of the W version. As I have noted, the majority of editions have a text based on R, and the editors have chosen to supplement R with T and material from W, (ignoring the presumed interpolations).

Concerned by the unreliability of this reconstructive method, Faulkes attempts to reconstruct the first page of R using four paper manuscripts derived from R (or a manuscript close to R),⁶ before the first leaf was lost:

The texts they contain are neither complete nor accurate, but with their help it is possible to make some fairly safe assumptions about the text on the missing leaf of R. (Faulkes 1979a: 205.)

Although W and U contain the first part of *Snorra Edda* in two versions, the readings in the younger manuscripts are preferable since they are derived from R, and for at least the first part of the Prologue, the paper manuscripts move up the ranks of worth to have independent textual value. T and the four manuscripts used to reconstruct the prologue of R are only held to be of value when they can provide readings from, supplement or patch medieval manuscripts.⁷

As concerns the reconstruction of the first leaf of R (the beginning of *Snorra Edda*’s Prologue), the post-Reformation manuscripts must be ‘medievalised’ to match the rest of the text. With regards to the possibilities of medieval reconstruction, Faulkes comments:

While it is possible to use paper manuscripts to reconstruct the contents of a lost medieval text, it is of course not possible to deduce from them the spelling or word-forms of the original. (Faulkes 1979a: 209.)

Note the plural “manuscripts” here; Faulkes’s use of stemmatic philology in identifying daughter manuscripts means that by taking various parts from different manuscripts to build a new text of the Prologue, he could quite possibly hit upon a reconstructed text that never existed. Indeed, in my opinion, it is possible to reconstruct the grammatical features and some spellings of the missing page of R with more certainty, as I demonstrate below.⁸

Faulkes indicates in this direction that he uses “spellings and forms commonly used (though not necessarily those that are most commonly used) in parts of R that are extant” (1979a: 209). This must have necessitated editing in a certain amount of retrospective orthography on the part of the editor; I give a few instances here. There are, for example, multiple examples of the character ‘ð’ (pronounced like ‘th’ in English *this*) in his reconstructed text, such as “Almáttigr guð skapaði himin” (Faulkes 1979a: l. 1, p. 209) [‘Almighty God created heaven’]. This would have been odd to find in the paper manuscripts, since ‘ð’ is rarely found in Icelandic script after 1400 (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 14), and indeed N and U have *skapade* (Faulkes 1979a: 211). K has *sköp* (Faulkes 1979a: 211), in which, as to be expected in a post-1400 manuscript, the oldest symbols ‘q’ and ‘ø’ have been discarded (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 49). WJ both have *skapaði*, a form probably retained by copying archaic spellings. Such a normalisation programme must also have deleted the epenthetic ‘u’, which was fully established in Icelandic orthography from the mid-15th century (Stefán Karlsson 2004: 15), for example *suðurs* < *suðrs* (Faulkes 1979a: l. 53, p. 210).

Knowledge of the grammatical, orthographic and phonological changes the language has gone through allows an editor to reconstruct how words would have looked on the page in past times. As Faulkes' reconstruction shows, paper manuscripts can thus play a pivotal role in the world of traditional philology, and should not be dismissed out of hand.

The Younger Manuscript as Cultural Artefact

Younger manuscripts are of value not only to preserve versions of a text, but also because they help build a picture of the dissemination and preservation history of such texts. Study of younger manuscripts can also provide information of how reading experiences of that text have changed with time; individual manuscript versions of a text

not only constitute a crucial history of reception of that text, but they also can help to inform how we may choose to theorize and historicize it. (Nichols 1997: 12.)

The use of "manuscripts as a magnifying glass" (Peters 2006: 206) is a gateway to the study of medieval culture on a textual level with evidence that is tangible and concrete (Peters 2006: 205–206).

Not only can this approach to philology have an impact on our reception of a text, but also on the reception of certain genres. The *fornaldarsögur* are preserved overwhelmingly in paper manuscripts, and the large number of manuscripts indicates they were certainly the most popular genre of late medieval and early-modern Iceland (Driscoll 2003: 257), but the genre is only in recent years gaining scholarly popularity. Some sagas have been edited and studied, but many need attention. Matthew J. Driscoll has spearheaded the campaign to highlight the virtues of New Philology, *fornaldarsögur* and later Icelandic romances such as the *riddarasögur* and *lygisögur*. He estimates there are about 1300 *fornaldarsaga* texts in manuscripts (paper and vellum), although the actual number produced would have been much larger, even as much as between 10,000 and 20,000 (Driscoll 1994a: 141–142; 2003: 259).⁹ There is a lot of work still to do.

The number of *fornaldarsögur* is rivalled by large numbers of *lygisögur*, romances composed and preserved in post-Reformation paper manuscripts, and Driscoll also points out:

saga-production in Iceland seems to have been every bit as great in, say, the eighteenth century as it had been in the thirteenth, even if the sagas produced appeal somewhat less to twentieth-century taste. (Driscoll 1994b: 84.)

(This observation should arrest the view of the demise of saga writing from 1400, since the saga tradition, at least in the case of the saga subgenres of the *fornaldarsögur*, *riddarasögur* and *lygisögur*, clearly remained productive and evenly stable for at least 400 years after the *Íslendingasögur* were composed [Driscoll 1994b: 89; 1997b].) In the main, these numerous *lygisögur* have gone unedited and untranslated, but an appreciation of their popularity in the late medieval and early modern period should be reason enough for these sagas and the *fornaldarsögur* to be worthwhile objects of study to New Philologists, since they have much to tell us from a synchronic perspective on the cultural activity of these sagas as reflected through manuscript copying and circulation.¹⁰

The copying and transmission process evidenced by each manuscript in the New Philological tradition can be complemented by the diachronic approach of Old Philology. Establishing stemmas (manuscript family trees) using aspects of the genealogical method and identifying the exemplars or near exemplars of younger manuscripts and comparing the younger and older text can reveal new insights into the transformation of the text in its new context. Such a comparison can bring to light not only textual changes but also changes in how readers engage with the material page, since this is reflected in changes of page layout.¹¹

Compositional Resources (Oral and Written) and Younger Manuscripts

Each textual source was compiled by some kind of guiding hand that shaped material into its present state. From a diachronic perspective, we can attempt to identify the

material each of these ‘shapers’ used. One common approach to retrospective studies is to take a linear or chronological view of our material and work backwards from the younger sources, seeing how traditions and themes have developed over time and making deductions about past states of the material on the way. In this paper, I have assumed that the younger Icelandic manuscripts in question preserve either versions of medieval texts (for example *fornaldarsögur*) or compositions (for example *lygisögur*) that have an intimate connection with or have developed from medieval material. The nature of the connection between the younger texts with the older, traditional material needs to be examined as to whether it is oral, written or at the interface of these modes of transmission. For the most part, Icelandic authors or scribes dealing with traditional, living saga genres such as the *fornaldarsögur* and *lygisögur* can be conceived of in terms of Doane’s model of written reperformance:

Whenever scribes who are part of the oral traditional culture write or copy traditional oral works, they do not merely mechanically hand them down; they rehear them, ‘mouth’ them, ‘reperform’ them in the act of writing in such a way that the text may change but remain authentic, just as a completely oral poet’s text changes from performance to performance without losing authenticity. (Doane 1991: 80–81.)

The construction of the new but ‘authentic’ written text (i.e. the new, changed text is a valid one in its own right) is done by a mixture of literary borrowings and the scribe being unconsciously steeped in the tradition, and both these mechanisms can happen in writing or orally or a combination of the two. Such influences meld together to form a web of intertextual relations that cannot easily be unpicked.

The *lygisögur* are of interest for how they use older material from the *fornaldarsögur* and from translated *riddarasögur* from the continent: in theme and structure the *lygisögur* fall somewhat in between these genres of vernacular and translated foreign literature (Stefán Einarsson 1957: 165–169; Kalinke 1985; Driscoll 1994b; 1997b). Their status is also slightly unclear, appearing

between traditional, orally-derived literature and being a product of a written culture with a strong sense of authorship. Judging by the example of Jón Oddsson Hjaltalín (1749–1835), whose production of these later romances has been studied by Driscoll (1994b; 1997a), we can posit that many of these later authors must have been very familiar indeed with the medieval Icelandic literature (Driscoll 1994b: 89) and consequently their work was steeped in that tradition. Their mode of use for this traditional material is rather interesting – compare these two observations:

There are a number of places in Jón’s sagas where the influence of the older literature is such that it is more reasonable to speak of literary borrowings than manifestations of a living tradition. (Driscoll 1994b: 89.)

It would be a mistake, however, to think of Jón sitting with the open text of *Völuspá* in front of him as he wrote. Many of the borrowings have an almost accidental quality about them. (Driscoll 1994b: 94)

Here can be seen the problematic nature of trying to prise apart literary borrowings and living tradition in a text born of a fusion of the two. Given Jón’s circumstances of being thoroughly familiar with his country’s literary heritage, “literary borrowings” and “manifestations of a living tradition” cannot easily be told apart. An idea, theme or phrase that is ‘borrowed’ in the first place could still be part of a living tradition, although one whose *modus operandi* is now written rather than oral or orally-derived (which is a criterion that most would associate with ‘tradition’, after all). As for the second quotation about Jón’s working habits with his sources, the “accidental quality” of the author’s use of sources might arise from non-written borrowing and living tradition being one and the same thing in early modern Iceland. I cite this example to point out that we must be careful in making assumptions about how orality, tradition, written borrowings and younger manuscripts intersect when we attempt to establish an analysis based on a linear or chronological view of material that authors must have been intimately familiar with for most of their

lives. Indeed, this need not diminish the value of later texts for diachronic studies, and texts located on the interface between the oral and written can be negotiated in different ways. This is easier if, methodologically speaking, the research question can accommodate both oral and written transmission as perfectly valid and ‘authentic’ modes of transmission. As far as method is concerned, careful comparative studies combined with an awareness of the individual contexts of each source have proven to be fruitful (see Osborn this volume).

Younger Manuscripts and Old Norse Mythology

Scholars of Old Norse mythology frequently draw upon the *fornaldarsögur* for examples with which to illustrate Old Norse pagan practice and belief. The written *fornaldarsögur* are at a particularly far remove from the time in which such sagas are set, before the settlement of Iceland. Their retrospective use is predicated on the basis that the sagas have many examples of Old Norse religion that can be extracted for comparative purposes, and perhaps on the basis that this genre has a particularly strong connection to oral traditions. The sagas depict a mythic-heroic past populated by kings and heroes from the Viking Age and earlier. Many of these can be connected with historical persons and events, and memories of them were maintained for centuries in oral forms before being written down. Retrospective use therefore postulates that any relevant pre-Christian motifs were held vital in the story worlds as they were transmitted and reshaped through successive generations.

The use of *fornaldarsögur* in studies of history of religion is done despite the fact that most scholars preface their studies with an acknowledgement of the abundant problems with using this genre as a legitimate source for pre-Christian religion, a problem captured by the complaint of Claus Krag (2004: 96) in his critique of using *fornaldarsögur* as an historical source: “Og prøver vi likevel på det, synes alt sammen å bli bare gjetttverk” [‘And if we try it anyway, everything seems to become just guesswork’]. At the same time, work by scholars like Stefan Brink (2007) and

Jens Peter Schjødt (2003; 2009) has helped to bring increasing attention to the pitfalls of the tendency to accept, for example, the homogenised view of Old Norse pre-Christian religion presented by *Snorra Edda*. Their work demonstrates that Old Norse religion would have been characterised by a lack of homogeneity, and we must be mindful of the implications that this ought to have on our understanding of the use of later texts as sources for Old Norse religion.

No scholar would attempt to extract a unified cosmology from the *fornaldarsögur*; rather we are limited to locating fragmented insights into earlier traditions of mythology. I will discuss *Þorsteins þáttur bæjarmagns* [‘The Tale of Thorsteinn Mansion-Might’] as a saga that may indeed still carry reflexes of an older tradition, and *Bósa saga* [‘The Saga of Bósi’], containing the prayer *Buslabæn* [‘The Prayer of Busla’], will be my example of a saga that sounds tempting but that likely does not provide any genuine link back to Old Norse mythology. Together, these two examples are illustrative of the problems and possibilities of uses of these materials for insights into earlier traditions of mythology.

The Case of Þorsteins þáttur bæjarmagns

Þorsteins þáttur bæjarmagns is from the late 13th century but uses much older material (Power 1993: 675–676); it is preserved in 54 manuscripts, many of which are young manuscripts (see “*Þorsteins þáttur bæjarmagns*: Manuscripts” [2011–2012]). Many scholars have analysed *Þorsteins þáttur bæjarmagns* (1944) as containing reflexes of Old Norse mythology that seem genuine.¹² Rosemary Power (1985: 172) has analysed the story as “a combination of Norse myth with Irish, or at least Celtic, secular tales of a visit to a delightful land of the immortals”. There are two Norse analogues that have been identified as linked with *Þorsteins þáttur*: the 10th century poem *Þórsdrápa* in which the gods Þórr and Loki visit the giant Geirrðör (Faulkes 1998: 25–30) and the story of the journey of Þórr to Útgarda-Loki (Faulkes 1982: 37–45). Both of these are recounted in *Snorra Edda*; *Þórsdrápa* is recorded in the section of *Edda* known as *Skáldskaparmál*,

and the journey to Útgarða-Loki in the preceding section called *Gylfaginning*.

Specific events in *Þorsteins þáttr* are paralleled in *Þórdrápa*. The most notable is that a ‘game’ is played. In *Þórdrápa*, Geirrøðr throws a hot spike at Þórr, who catches it and kills Geirrøðr when throwing it back (Power 1985: 163). In *Þorsteins þáttr*, there is also a throwing game between Þorsteinn [‘Þórr-Stone’] and Geirrøðr, but this time with a hot seal’s head, and Þorsteinn goes on to kill Geirrøðr with his magic spike (Power 1985: 163). Power has pointed out in connection with this episode that nothing religious or occult occurs (1985: 163), but despite the lack of explicitly mythological posturing sometimes found in the *fornaldarsögur*, this is probably because Þorsteinn is presented as a Christian hero of Óláfr Tryggvason, and this seems a clear example of an Old Norse mythological story pattern being used in or by later sources.

In the same scene in *Þorsteins þáttr*, we find the second point of contact that the tale has with Old Norse mythology: the journey to Útgarða-Loki told by Snorri in prose as a myth. Again, Þórr and Loki go out together, and end up in Útgarða-Loki’s hall where they undergo humiliating trials which they lose; those trials, present in both *Gylfaginning* and the *þáttr*, are a drinking trial and wrestling in an otherworld hall (Power 1985: 164).

Power suggests that it is in fact the myth that has been influenced by the saga and not the reverse, but this seems unlikely. John McKinnell (1994: 57–86) demonstrates that Þórr’s visit to Útgarða-Loki is of the same story pattern as Þórr’s encounter with Geirrøðr. A version of the story of Þórr’s visit to Útgarða-Loki also occurs in Saxo Grammaticus’s *Gesta Danorum* from around 1200, and Saxo most likely got the story from Icelandic oral tradition (see further Power 1985: 164–166; McKinnell 1994: 59–85).¹³ This, combined with the early date of *Þórdrápa*, suggests that the mythological tale was well-known, and that the *þáttr* is a reflex of a common traditional mythological narrative in which both Geirrøðr and Útgarða-Loki find a place as antagonists of Þórr, which is interesting in itself as a development of the myth.

Whether or not we view the *þáttr* episode itself as having independent value depends on our methodological approach. If we are to espouse the approach that there is no ‘best’ reading of the material, common to the New Philological approach, we find in the *þáttr* that two underlying mythological narratives sharing a common story pattern have been combined, and thus the *þáttr* forms a late part of the complex of stories about the god Þórr. From an Old Philological approach, it could be argued that since the two mythological narratives that were transformed to make *Þorsteins þáttr* have been identified, it is these older examples of the narratives that should be primary and regarded as more ‘authentic’. This view has significant negative impact on the use of *Þorsteins þáttr* as a source for Old Norse mythology. Either way, this example shows some kind of continuity of tradition, although it is probably not possible to discern what is drawn from written or oral sources.

The Case of Buslabæn

In *Bósa saga*, the situation in which we find a possible instance related to Old Norse pre-Christian magical practices is slightly different,¹⁴ and I will explore the connection of runes the curse *Buslubæn* to the Old Norse verbal charming tradition (cf. Gallo 2004; Thorvaldsen 2010) in the light of Old and New Philological methodologies. This curse is connected to a string of runes that mimic or employ an old formula in an unconventional way, but which have been demonstrated to be disconnected from the old tradition by Claiborne W. Thompson (1978).¹⁵ The runes appear to be the solution to a riddle posed at the end of the curse:

Komi hér seggir sex,
seg þú mér nofn þeira
öll óbundin,
ek mun þér sýna:
getr þú eigi ráðit,
svá at mér rétt þykki,
þá skulu þik hundar
í hel gnaga,
en sál þín
sökki í víti

r.o.þ.k.m.u iiii sssss ttttt iiii llll

Let six men come here
 (if you) tell me their names
 all clearly (or ‘unencrypted?’),
 I will reveal to you:
 if you cannot interpret
 so that they seem right to me
 than shall dogs
 gnaw you to death
 and your soul
 sink in torment.
Ristill, æstill, þistill, kistill, mistill, vistill.
 (McKinnell et al. 2004: 139.)

The runes are an indigenous Old Norse formula found in other places (collected by Thompson 1978: 51–53; McKinnell et al. 2004: 134–140), and the formula seems to have been intended as a locking formula (for example on a chest or grave) and to ward off evil (McKinnell et al. 2004: 134). In *Bósa saga*, the runes are integrated into the literary context of the curse and riddle and thus are likely contemporaneous (Thompson 1978: 55). As a comparison of the transliterated runes and their rearrangement in the translation shows, the runes are bound and must be rearranged from the way they are written to form words; such a cryptographic rearrangement of the runes was normal when this particular charm was written down (McKinnell et al. 2004: 134).

Thompson has demonstrated that indeed the curse sequence and its closing riddle-rune section is totally literary, since it depends on the written runes in order to be able to solve the riddle. It thus seems unlikely that the curse and riddle sequence can be linked convincingly to (oral) Old Norse magical practices. Busla is supposed to chant the curse in the saga, but she could not chant the runic formula in its bound form – the runes need to be rearranged first. As such, the sequence is an “optical puzzle” and should be dated to around the 14th century, at the same time as the first written version of the saga was likely to have been written. (Thompson 1978: 55.) This seems to make it a late, parodic version of the charm, the older examples of which occur in other, quite different contexts. In addition, its use in the saga as a rounding-off device in the curse sequence is quite meaningless and apparently leads the curse nowhere.

Retrospective methods in this case can be considered to reveal that *Buslubæn* does not reflect Old Norse pre-Christian practices regarding the charm as an oral text, but it does reveal information about a location and time period in which the formula was circulating. From a methodological perspective, this comparative strategy comes rather from the angle of Old Philology, since it seeks to assess the material on a chronological basis. At the same time, the example illustrates the importance of considering not only the content of the text, here the runic sequence, but also the nature of the manuscript page itself and what its synchronic context can reveal.

Challenges of Late Materials

That younger manuscripts, *fornaldarsögur* and *lygisögur* all have much value in themselves is without doubt. Nevertheless, using tales such as the *fornaldarsögur* to provide examples for or sources of Old Norse religion (since they are set in pre-Christian Scandinavia) has many potential drawbacks, as I have demonstrated above, not least because the records are removed by centuries from the events they purport to record.

By the comparison of my discussion of *Buslubæn* with the example of *Þorsteins þáttr*, we can also see that the conclusions drawn about whether the material is valid or not as a source of Old Norse pre-Christian religion depends directly on the questions we ask of such material (for a discussion of the relationship between the material available and the research question, see Suenson, this volume). My discussion was oriented to show that the runic formula in *Buslubæn* is not a traditional oral charm, whereas my discussion of *Þorsteins þáttr* showed that it should be considered valuable as a later narrative expression of a mythic complex involving Þórr. As I pointed out in connection with *Þorsteins þáttr*, it would be possible to discount its value by saying it is merely a combination of two other narratives, and that they are the valuable elements. Likewise, it would be possible to reverse my discussion of *Buslubæn* and argue that it is interesting and valuable as the latest example of a once orally circulating runic charm being used in a

literary and written saga context. In using later material as a source for Old Norse pre-Christian religion, much depends on emphasis and methodological approach.

Although the sagas are indeed replete with tempting descriptions of pagan rituals and visits from gods, the cosmology they construct is fragmented and dissimilar across different sagas and modes of expression (the sagas are prosimetric, made up of prose and verse: see Goeres, this volume). In addition, their view of pagan religion should be taken in the context of medieval and late-medieval Iceland and the turbulent 13th century that saw Iceland come under the Norwegian crown:

With renewed stability in the fourteenth century, what was left of the aristocracy, as well as the descendants of old *goðar* ['chieftain'] families and new social actors, achieved social position through royal office. Questioning about the origin of social identity had disappeared and so did the family sagas. However, *fornaldarsögur* continued to be written for many centuries but progressively lost the strong links with the distant past of the leading families of Iceland and therefore their sense of identity. The world of the *fornaldarsögur* became a world of pure fiction, not without links with the social and cultural realities of their time of writing, but links of a different kind, which need further study to elucidate. (Torfi H. Tulinius 2000: 261–262.)

In terms of Old Norse religion, the *fornaldarsögur* represent what was known and available in the period in which they were written down, the 13th century onwards. Evidence from different periods is mixed together and shaped by their contemporary worldview, in a society that read these sagas solely for the purposes of entertainment.

The methods we can use to deal with texts such as the *fornaldarsögur* as sources, for example, of religious beliefs and practices, and of early medieval Icelandic mentality before the sagas were committed to writing (see Schjødt 2003) must be born of both New and Old Philology if our results are to be valid. As I showed with my case studies of *Porsteins þáttr* and *Buslubæn* above, prioritising one methodology compromises the fairness of the research questions that we

pose to the material. We must embrace as many sources as possible and present each source separately (as done in Røthe's 2010 book about Old Norse religion in the *fornaldarsögur*). Both a New Philological refusal to prioritise readings and the comparative qualities of traditional philology must be brought to bear in order to fashion an approach to material from late manuscripts that is sensitive and appreciative of variations (not only textual but also variations in content), and that embraces the diverse origins and forms of *fornaldarsögur* texts; the writers of the *fornaldarsögur* were themselves reconstructing a pagan past long gone.

Conclusions

In this paper, I have framed my discussion of several retrospective methods pertinent to working with younger Iceland manuscripts with the methodologies of New Philology and Old Philology. In the first place, I took the reconstruction of the Prologue to *Edda* as an example of the reconstructive power of younger manuscripts even to projects with an Old Philological bent, and furthermore demonstrated that aspects of the physical text such as orthography and page layout can be reconstructed, and not only the text's context. In the context of younger manuscripts as cultural artefacts, I approached the question of blended oral and written compositional resources and concluded that our research methodology must be cognisant of complex intertextual webs that will never be fully unravelled while undertaking detailed comparative investigations. In my examples from *Porsteins þáttr* and *Buslubæn*, I applied New and Old Philological perspectives to the material and demonstrated that prioritising either unfairly sways any conclusions about Old Norse pre-Christian traditions we might draw, and that a combination of the priorities of Old and New Philology is a necessary step in rectifying this imbalance.

An understanding of the textual and literary historical concerns unique to young manuscripts must, as Nichols says, "inform how we may choose to theorize and historicize" them (Nichols 1997: 12), and this must in turn influence our starting points for the retrospective projects that are based on

them, for example our choice of corpus/genre or methodological standpoint. The two methodologies of Old and New Philology are relevant to retrospective methods because they inform the orientation from which the research question in hand will be approached, whatever that may be. I have demonstrated here that in order to get as much out of younger manuscripts (or younger material) as possible, we must acknowledge the qualities of both methodologies in our approaches.

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Notes

1. For example, the manuscript *Hauksbók*, dated by Stefán Karlsson (1964) to the first decade of the 14th century, contains versions of *Hervarar saga* and the *Páttir af Ragnarssonum*. Such material would have circulated orally before this.
2. For an overview and debate of ‘New’ or ‘Material’ Philology versus ‘Traditional’ Philology in Old Norse, see Driscoll 2010. Cf. Wolf 1993 for a discussion of New Philology from the perspective of the reader of scholarship produced under this methodological banner. For a good introduction to Material Philology in general, see Nichols 1997 and the references therein. *The New Philology*, the 1990 volume of the journal *Speculum*, was entirely devoted to various aspects of New Philology.
3. This is the thrust of one of New Philology’s classic texts, Bernard Cerquiglini’s book *Éloge de la variante: Histoire critique de la philologie* (1989). This has been published in English translation as *In Praise of the Variant: A Critical History of Philology* (1999); Menzer’s review (2001) provides a useful summary of his arguments.
4. Wenzel (1990) does not, for example, seem convinced that the division between ‘Old’ and ‘New’ Philology exists, rather that it is a question of what aspect of philology is currently in the limelight. This seems to stem from a failure to distinguish between method and methodology, as do rejections of New Philology that are made on the basis that it is exactly what philologists ‘did before’.
5. R is Gks 2367 4^{to}, Royal Library, Copenhagen, from c. 1325. T is MS No. 1374, University Library, Utrecht, written around 1600 but thought to be a copy of a now lost medieval manuscript. W is AM 242 fol., Arnarnagðæan Institute, Copenhagen, from the middle of the 14th century. U is DG 11, University Library, Uppsala, from the early 14th century (Faulkes 1982: viii–ix, xxix–xxxiii).
6. These four paper manuscripts are KNThJ. For descriptions of them and how they relate to the Prologue (summarised here), see Faulkes 1979a: 205 and Faulkes 1979b: 43–44, 123–124, 126, 149. K is AM 755 4^{to}, written by Ketill Jörundsson (1603–1670). In it, “the first part of the Prologue, lacking now in R, has a text similar to that in W, but without the interpolations found there” (Faulkes 1979b: 124). N is Nks 1878 b 4^{to} from the 17th century, and has “abridged and paraphrased versions of the Prologue to *Snorra Edda*” (Faulkes 1979b: 126). Th is Thott 1494 4^{to}, which, despite the Prologue being incomplete, inaccurate and condensed with apparently deliberate alterations, has material from R not otherwise supplied from TUW and the Prologue “seems to be most closely related to that in R” (Faulkes 1979b: 44). J is Sth. Papp. fol. nr. 38 (Prologue 46v–50), from the second half of the 17th century, “where the text of the prologue is found as part of the *Edda* compilation attributed to Jón lærði Guðmundsson” (Faulkes 1979a: 205).
7. Occasionally, other *Snorra Edda* manuscripts are held up as more valuable for other reasons than supplementing medieval versions of *Snorra Edda*. Two examples are *Laufás Edda* and *Melsteð’s Edda*. *Laufás Edda*, for example, is an interesting example of how, in the early 17th century, Magnús Ólafsson saw it fit to arrange the *Snorra Edda* “into a form more suitable for his contemporaries to be able to study it than that in which it was found in the old manuscripts” (Faulkes 1979b: 17), and it also contains several strophes not found elsewhere. Another example is *Melsteð’s Edda*, SÁM 66, which contains eddic poems and other texts as well as *Snorra Edda*. It was written between 1765 and 1766 and is of interest not least for its remarkable and entertaining colour illustrations of scenes from *Snorra Edda* and portraits of gods.
8. Reconstruction can also take place on a basic level of manuscript *mise-en-page* and support: poetry set out in short, verse lines in younger manuscripts would have been set out in long, prose style lines in medieval Icelandic manuscripts; paper supports would have instead been of more robust vellum; younger humanistic cursive styles would have rather been medieval, Gothic hands; and one thing that did not change: abbreviations in Icelandic paper manuscripts were as widely used as in medieval ones.
9. For comparison, Marianne Kalinke (1985: 320) also estimates numbers of texts and manuscripts for the *riddarasögur*: “One can justifiably speak about scribal mass production in post-Reformation Iceland: some 190 books and pamphlets, primarily religious in character, were published in Iceland during the 17th-century; in the same century that number is matched, however, merely by the preserved manuscripts that contain *riddarasögur*. The Old-Norse Icelandic romances have been transmitted in more than eight hundred manuscripts, an uncommonly large number,

especially if one considers that not a few codices contain as many as ten individual sagas; some contain even more [...] In all, more than fifteen hundred individual texts survive, although admittedly not a few of these are fragmentary.”

10. I am indebted to Frog for helping me to clarify this thought.
11. See Wenzel 1990: 14–15; O’Keeffe 1990; Huisman 1998; Busby 2002: 127–224 for the ways in which manuscript readers engage with page layout.
12. For bibliography, see Power 1985: 174n.22; see also McKinnell 1994: 57–86; Frog 2011a: 89–90.
13. For Snorri’s strategies in engaging with this material, see Frog 2011b: 18ff.
14. *Bósa saga* is thought to have been composed ca. 1350 and exists in two quite different recensions. The older recension is found in 15th century vellum manuscripts, while the later recension is found in paper manuscripts from the 17th and 18th centuries. The saga has a complicated textual history and was very popular until recent times. (Naumann 1993: 54.) The runes are found in the earlier recension in three vellum manuscripts from the 15th and 16th centuries (AM 510 4^{to}, 11v; AM 577 4^{to}, 54r; AM 586 4^{to}, 14v) and one paper manuscript Lbs 423 fol., 338v–339r from the 18th century (McKinnell et al. 2004: 139; Lbs 243 fol. 2009–2012).
15. Cf. Langer 2009, who argues that *Buslubæn* is indeed indicative of continuity with medieval practical magic.

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Ferocious Beast (*óarga dýr*) between North and East

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The paper presents a linguistic approach to obscure collocative adjective–noun expressions (Old Norse *óarga dýr* and Old Russian *ljutyj zver'*) that appear to have become lexicalized as discrete lexical-semantic units in spoken language (which could also be described as formulae) but which are only preserved in medieval written texts, where their meaning potential has been adapted to or manipulated within the emerging register of written language. The method or strategy employed is typological cross-linguistic comparison through which corresponding phenomena in different languages can be reciprocally illuminating and reciprocally reinforcing. This becomes particularly significant in cases where one or both corpora are extremely limited. According to this method, each lexicalized phrase is contextualized within the relevant written corpus, as are its constituent components in cases where these exhibit limited use. Patterns of use are reviewed, correlating semantic use with the type of text. Rhetorical strategy in use or pattern of use is addressed as an essential factor when assessing semantic use in different texts (of which avoidance expressions related to naming-taboo would be a ritualized form). The correlation of each example across languages then offers insights into patterns of use, as well as reinforcing interpretations where evidence in one area or feature under discussion in one language may not be as well attested or evident as in the other. This reveals both cases as typologically similar developments of special expressions from spoken language being adapted as social resources into the emerging register of written narrative discourse during the medieval period. All this will be illustrated by a case study of Old Norse *óarga dýr* and Old Russian *ljutyj zver'*.

The Collocation ljutyj zver' in the 'Testament' of Vladimir Monomakh

In the Old Russian literature, there are few texts comparable to the *Pouchenie* ['Testament'] of Vladimir Monomakh

(†1125). Indeed, this is a rather large biography of the Great Prince written in the first person. The *Testament* is a unique source for the description of the everyday life of a prince in the 11th century, exhibiting the spectrum of tastes for reading and literature of an educated person of that time.

It is known that one of the primary entertainments (or perhaps more accurately, the duties) of a ruler was hunting. Monomakh relates the difficulties of his life as a huntsman almost in as much detail as those of his military enterprises. The ancient names of the animals hunted by the prince, and of those which hunted him, have always been very interesting to historians, linguists and even for biologists, such as those in the following example:

а се в Черниговѣ дѣаьль ѥсмь . конь дики^х
своима рукама свазаль ѥсмь . въ пуша^х .
ї . и . к . живы^х конь . а кромѣ того иже по
Рови ѣзда ималь ѥсмь своима рукама тѣ
же кони дикиѣ . тура ма . бѣ . метала на
розѣ^х и с конемъ . влень ма вдинъ боль .
а . в . лоси вдинъ ногами топталъ . а
други рогама боль . вепрь ми на бедръ
мечъ ѡталъ . медвѣдь ми у колѣна
подъклада окусили . лютии звѣрь
сочилъ ко мнѣ на бедры . и конь со
мною поверже . и Бѣ неврежена ма
сѣблюде . (ПСРЛ, I (1926 / 1997): 251.)

At Chernigov, I even bound wild horses with my bare hands and captured ten or twenty live horses with the lasso, and on top of that, while riding along the Rus, I caught these same wild horses barehanded. Two bison tossed me and my horse on their horns, a stag once gored me, one elk stamped upon me, whereas another gored me, a boar once tore my sword from my thigh, on one occasion a bear bit my kneecap, and on another *wild beast* (*лютии звѣрь*) jumped on my flank and threw my horse with me. But God preserved me unharmed. (Cross 1930: 308–309.)

Among these animals, one remains mysterious and has not yet been defined, in spite of the cooperative efforts of a number of scholars. The collocation *ljutyj zver'*

(*лютый зверь* [‘fierce, wild beast’]) presents a particular lexical-semantic unit: its meaning is not merely the sum of meanings of its components. In order to understand why Vladimir Monomakh used this very expression in his description of the hunt in the *Pouchenie*, it is necessary, on the one hand, to determine its rhetorical function, and, on the other hand, to illustrate some linguistic and cultural parallels. At first sight, the parallels addressed are not directly connected with the work by Monomakh, but they illustrate how an identical – or at least very similar – formula functions in another literature tradition.

I believe that such a parallel can be found on Scandinavian ground in the equally mysterious *óarga dýr*.

Óarga dýr in Written Sources

In Old Norse texts, there is a corresponding fixed expression *óarga dýr*, which literally means ‘intrepid, bold, fearless beast’. However, what is the actual meaning of this well-attested lexical-semantic unit? In the translated texts and in texts written under the influence of the continental literary or encyclopedic tradition, *óarga dýr* often means ‘lion’. For example, Samson kills an ‘intrepid beast’ (*óarga dýr*) with his own hands,¹ and Daniel the Prophet is thrown in a ditch full of wild, fierce beasts (Benediktsson 1944: 39).² In addition, *óarga dýr* may describe some other large predatory animals (such as a panther), which were exotic for the Scandinavians. A similar conclusion has been drawn concerning the meaning of Old Russian *ljutyj zver'* in translated texts and in texts written under the influence of foreign patterns.³ However, would it be realistic to think that Monomakh was fighting with a lion in a Russian forest?

It is significant that both Old Russian and Old Norse texts had their own specific words for ‘lion’ – *lev* (левъ) in Old Russian and *leo*, *leo[n]* in Old Norse. In both Old Russian and Old Norse, a ‘lion’ was more of a literary figure than an object of hunting. Both the expression *ljutyj zver'* and the expression *óarga dýr* appear to signify the absolute personification of fierceness and wildness within their respective languages. In this

regard, it is significant that *óarga dýr* often occurs in the texts as an element used in a comparison specifically for descriptions of men in battle, these comparisons being monotypic although they can be found in quite diverse sagas. Such a formulaic characterization of a fierce fighter can, for example, be taken from: *Fóstbræðra saga* [‘The Saga of the Foster-Brothers’], a classic family saga describing a feud in Iceland in the 10th century, in which this or that personage is mentioned as fighting against his enemies *sem it óarga dýr* [‘like an intrepid beast’] (Björn Þórolfsson 1925: 18, 81); *Gyðinga saga* [‘The Saga of the Jews’], an exposition of some parts of the Old Testament, where a corresponding comparison is made (Guðmundur Þorláksson 1881: 36); and *Karlamagnúss saga* [‘The Saga of Charlemagne’] (Unger 1860: 428, 520) and *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar* [‘The Saga of Tristan and Iseuld’] (Brynjulfson 1878: 17, ch. 11), rather free renderings of the West European compositions, where this comparison is also present. (For additional examples, see Beck 1972: 101; cf. also the data of *The Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*: s.v. ‘óargadýr’, ‘óargr’.)

Analyzing the Old Norse sources, it becomes apparent that *óarga dýr* cannot be reduced to a single, real predatory animal within the corpus of texts as a whole. Nevertheless, when individual texts are taken separately, this becomes possible, but not obligatory. Indeed, in some cases, the predator designated as a ‘wild beast’ can be identified. However, even in those cases it remains uncertain to what extent this identification was intended in the text by the author. Apparently, *óarga dýr* is not a special construction invented to designate exotic animals that do not occur in Scandinavia. This expression is therefore likely to have existed in the language prior to its use for these exotic animals, and probably for some time had, due to its broad compositional meaning, been frequently used in the literate tradition to signify wild, fierce beasts generally as well as various predatory animals exotic to the Scandinavians. These considerations offer a resolution for the semantics of *óarga dýr* in the language use of literature, but do not

resolve the semantics of the earlier uses of the expression from which these derive.

The Semantics and Associations of óargr

The adjective *óargr* is the negative form of a term that was very significant in the Old Norse culture, especially in the language of law: *argr* / *ragr* ['coward, effeminate, unmanly'] (Weisweiler 1923: 16–29; Sørensen 1983: passim). In juridical texts *argr/ragr* is classified as obscene vocabulary, apparently connected with accusing a man of being a passive homosexual.⁴ Accordingly, the semantics of *ó-argr* is an antithesis of *argr*, 'un-tamed' in the sort of sexual domination potentially implied in *argr*, or 'that which cannot be made *argr*'. The model of the descriptive phrase itself, where the adjective component includes a negative element, suggests that here we are dealing with a euphemistic designation of some predator associated with naming taboos. This begs the question: is it possible to reveal the original, pre-written-language meaning of the euphemistic word combination on the basis of material from the written sources?

To my mind, it is possible. First of all, it would be useful to reveal what the word *óargr* means outside of the set expression *óarga dýr*, in the texts which are to the least extent connected with the continental encyclopedic tradition. In particular, the fact cannot be ignored that the adjective *óargr* (*úargr*), which occurs very rarely and is used almost exclusively within the set expression under consideration, is known as a nickname as well.

It is potentially significant that the holder of the nickname *óargi* was a man having the proper name *Úlfr* ['Wolf']. In the family of that man, the 'wolf'-semantics of the proper name were not lost. This is clear from the story about his grandson, who had been named *Úlfr* after him. The latter's proper name and nickname came together to form the peculiar combination *Kveld-úlfr* that is explained in the saga. *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* tells that *Kveldúlfr*'s behavior in the evening differed greatly from that in the daytime:

Var þat siðr hans at rísa vpp árdegiss ok ganga þá um sýslur manna, eða þar er

smíðr voro ok sjá yfer fénat sinn ok akra, en stundum var hann á tali við menn, þá er ráða hans þurftu. Kunni hann til allz góð ráð at leggja, því at hann var foruitri. En dag huern, er at kuelldi leið, þá gerðiz hann styggr, suá at fáer menn máttu orðum við hann koma. Var hann kuelldsuafr. Þat var mál manna, at hann veri mjog hamrammr. Hann var kallaðr Kuelldúlfr (Finnur Jónsson 1886–1888: 4, chapter 1).

He made a habit of rising early to supervise the work of his labourers and skilled craftsmen, and to take a look at his cattle and cornfields. From time to time he would sit and talk with people who came to ask for his advice, for he was a shrewd man and never at loss for the answer to any problem. But every day, as it drew towards evening, he would grow so ill-tempered that no one could speak to him, and it wasn't long before he would go to bed. There was talk about his being a shape-changer, and people called him *Kveld-Ulf* [literally 'Evening Wolf']. (Hermann Pálsson & Edwards 1976: 21.)

While the name and nickname of the grandson was understood as a set expression meaning 'Evening Wolf', the name and nickname of his grandfather, *Úlfr óargi*, was, probably, interpreted as 'Fearless Wolf'. The nickname or, better to say, epithet *Kveld-* is to a great extent conditioned, determined by the proper name *Úlfr*. When brought together, they combine to mean a were-animal – a werewolf, a person who turns into a wolf in the evening. The clear semantic relevance of 'wolf' to this family's identity and its naming practices is complemented by evidence that the epithets identifying and distinguishing different 'wolves' within the family were semantically relevant to the basic name 'Wolf' (i.e. the semantics of the basic name *Úlfr* ['Wolf'] acted as a determinant factor on the epithet). This consequently gives reason to believe that the epithet *óargi* is also determined by the proper name *Úlfr*, underlining *óargi* as characterizing the courage or ferocity intrinsic to the *wolf*. The nicknames of the grandfather and the grandson, therefore, acquire the complete meanings only in combination with their names. In other words, *Úlfr óargi* presents a sort of set expression in a manner

corresponding to *óarga dýr*, only instead of the word *dýr* there is the word *úlfr*. When the adjective *óargi* is only encountered in two combinations – *Úlfr óargi* and *óarga dýr* – and combination with *úlfr* appears restricted to the use of *úlfr* as a personal name, it becomes reasonable to hypothesize that *óarga dýr* was originally a euphemistic designation for the *wolf* in particular.⁵

Further ‘traces’ of the primary, pre-written language meaning of *óarga dýr* can be pursued in the written sources. Graphically and phonetically (but not etymologically) *óargr* or *úargr* is close to the word *vargr*, one of the central cultural-juridical terms of the Scandinavian Middle Ages. As the adjective *óargr* (*úargr*) was regularly used only with the word ‘beast’ (*dýr*), therefore graphically, the combination *óarga dýr* or *úarga dýr* sometimes simply appeared as *varga dýr* in written texts (cf. e.g. *it varga dýr* in *Morkinskinna* or *hin vaurgu dýr* in the wording of the A manuscript of *Piðriks saga af Bern*).⁶ In the language of law, *vargr* is ‘an outlaw, social outcast, enemy’, however, in the non-juridical texts *vargr* may mean ‘wolf’.⁷ Apparently, the meanings ‘outcast’ and ‘wolf’ in Old Norse were not opposed to each other and, somehow, were blended. *Óarga dýr* and *vargr*, in spite of the difference in etymology, were extremely close for the native speakers.

So, it seems probable that initially the expression *óarga dýr* was used as an allegoric or euphemistic designation of the *wolf*. The development of the semantics of *óarga dýr* may be schematically presented as follows: initially this is a descriptive, tabooing designation for a certain predatory animal (possibly from the vocabulary of the hunters). This animal was the locally understood personification of something fierce and alien. Furthermore, this word collocation was used to signify a fierce beast of prey. This meaning is observed clearly in the translated and bookish texts where it is used to signify various predatory beasts – above all, a *lion*.

The great semantic potential implicit in this evolution was provided by the generalized, descriptive character of the euphemism *óarga dýr*. It should be stressed, however, that the change in meaning from

‘wolf’ to ‘lion’ was not at all definitive or final. It is rather significant that, in the written tradition, the expression *óarga dýr* had no fixed meaning as referring to a particular predator. The allegory of rapacity and ferocity which linked to the word combination *óarga dýr*, could probably sometimes imply the old meaning ‘wolf’ as well. It should be noted once more that a word combination of the kind that underwent this complicated evolution allowed a combination of the more general and the particular meanings for the literary text: it could simultaneously be and not be the synonym of some particular, monosemantic word.

Ljutyj zver' in the Light of óarga dýr

The euphemistic character of the Russian expression *ljutyj zver'* [‘fierce beast’] is not as evident as that of Old Norse *óarga dýr*, yet this thesis has been advanced already in a number of papers. Here, the typological comparison of this expression with the Old Norse *óarga dýr* appears to be productive once again: the components of *óarga dýr* are more lexically bound, and the euphemistic character of its structure (containing negation) is by far more obvious. Nevertheless, it is never an easy task to elucidate what this or that expression presented beyond the limits of the written language when all of the available material for the description of the epoch of interest is in the form of written texts. At some point in time, both the Old Norse expression *óarga dýr* and the Old Russian expression *ljutyj zver'* acquired a rather stable and adequate ‘functional niche’ in the literary language.

If it is hypothesized that the Old Russian *ljutyj zver'* [‘fierce beast’] developed in close typological correspondence to the Old Norse expression, this can be situated in relation to its fit with the rhetoric and stylistic strategy of Vladimir Monomakh in his *Testament*. In the *Testament*, alongside other techniques, Monomakh frequently engages in plays based on the combination of the abstract and particular semantics of terms and cultural concepts. The whole of Monomakh’s text can be described as balancing on the cusp of its extreme autobiographical character and engaging a vast body of literature through

citation. For example, in the passage following the description of hunting ‘traumas’ quoted above, he employs the word ‘head’ (*голова*) with almost punning repetition as it carries remarkably different loads of meaning in the various cases:

[...] лютыи звѣрьъ скочилъ ко мнѣ на бѣдры . и конь со мною поверже . и Бѣ неврежена ма съблюде . и с коня много падахъ . голову си розбихъ дважды . и руцѣ и нозѣ свои вередихъ . въ оуности своѣи вередихъ не блюда живота своѣго . ни щадя головы своѣѣ. (ПСРЛ, I (1926 / 1997): 251.)

[...] wild beast (*лютыи звѣрьъ*) jumped on my flank and threw my horse with me. But God preserved me unharmed. I often fell from my horse, fractured my skull (*голову*) twice, and in my youth injured my arms and legs when I did not take heed for my life or spare my head (*ни щадя головы своѣѣ*). (Cross 1930: 309.)

In other words, the Prince liked to juxtapose a very concrete word with a corresponding word referring to something very abstract. He places the expression *ljutyj zver'* at the end of the passage about the hunt, precisely at the very end of the list of absolutely real animals: *bison, elk, a bear*, etc. This list is arguably ordered according to the prestige of each animal on the hunt or the threat each poses to the hunter, in which case the progression suggests that the *ljutyj zver'* is a real animal and the most prestigious or threatening.⁸ It should be pointed out that the *wolf* is absent from this list, although its presence should be expected as a dangerous adversary of the hunter.

It would be very consistent with Vladimir Monomakh's rhetorical strategies in the text to name the predators that had attacked him in common terms and then to designate the last of these euphemistically. The double rhetorical load seems particularly justified here, at the culmination of the list. Avoidance terms characterize their objects with an honorific status. This would be consistent with the list as an ordered progression and the ultimate status of the final adversary, and might be described as a rhetorical flourish that makes the list more dramatic. This rhetorical frame supports the identification of the *ljutyj*

zver' as an otherwise unmentioned real animal and concrete adversary of the hunter that has been designated in this way for rhetorical effect. Consequently, the *wolf* becomes the most probable referent of the avoidance term as the only culturally significant adversary of the hunter not otherwise mentioned. The use of *ljutyj zver'* combines a euphemistic designation of the specific predatory animal (a *wolf*, as proposed here) and the maximally generalized meaning of a fierce beast of prey, which can be seen as a kind of collective image of the human's adversary during the hunt. In other words, Monomakh makes a play on the polysemantic character of this construction, both realizing the final concrete animal in the list and simultaneously construing that conflict as an ultimate and symbolic confrontation between man and beast. Moreover, the appearance of the construction in the text appears attributable precisely to its polysemantic character.

This is not the only case of such usage of the word combination *ljutyj zver'* in Old Russian sources. It is mentioned in a similar way in the no less famous *Slovo o Polku Igoreve* ['The Tale of Igor's Campaign']. There, the prince Vseslav of Polock:

скочи от нихъ лютымъ звѣремъ въ плъночи изъ Бѣлагада, обѣсися синѣ мыглѣ, утрѣже вазни с три кусы, отвори врата Новуграду, разшибе славу Ярославу, скочи влъкомъ до Немиги...⁹

galloped from them like a wild beast (*ljutyj zver'*) at midnight from Bēlgorod, swathed himself in a blue mist, rent asunder his bonds into three parts, opened wide the gates of Nōvgorod, shattered the Glory of Yaroslāv [the Wise]; galloped like a wolf to the Nemíga...

Compare Vladimir Nabokov's translation:

Like a fierce beast
he leapt away from them [the troops?],
at midnight,
out of Belgorod,
having enveloped himself
in a blue mist.
Then at morn,
he drove in his battle axes,
opened the gates of Novgorod,
shattered the glory of Yaroslav,
[and] loped like a wolf / to the Nemíga...¹⁰

Apparently, in this poetic expression, the metaphoric and, paradoxically, a very particular meaning are combined. Indeed, it is possible to speak of a trope characterizing how fast and secretly prince Vseslav was riding. The example is interesting because there is every reason to assume that a trope of this kind appears under the influence of the general idea of Vseslav being a werewolf, suffering from lycanthropy, because his mother gave birth to him through magic:

югоже роди мѣи ѿ вѣлхованъѣ . мѣи бо
родивши юго . бы^ѣ юму ѣзвено на главѣ
юго . рекоша бо волсви мѣи юго . се
ѣзвено наважи на нь . да носить ѣ до
живота своего . ѣже носить Всеславъ и до
сего днѣ на собѣ . сего ради немлѣтъ ѣсть
на кровъпролитѣе (ПСРЛ, I (1926 / 1997):
155, sub anno 1044.)

Him his mother bore by enchantment, for
when his mother bore him, there was a caul
over his head, and the magicians bade his
mother bind this caul upon him, that he
might carry it with him the rest of his life.
Vseslav accordingly bears it to this day, and
for this reason he is pitiless in bloodshed
(Cross 1930: 228.)

Therefore the description of Vseslav running
like a *ljutyj zver'* cannot be separated from his
identity as a 'wolf' any more than the epithet
óarga can be from *Úlfr*, as discussed above.

Notes

1. *med hondum sinum einum banadi eno oarga dyri* (Kålund 1908: 50).
2. Cf. Kålund 1908: 52; Wisén 1872: 63; Benediktsson 1944: 39. On King David of the Bible killing the lion (= *óarga dýr*) see Benediktsson 1944: 31; Zitzelsberger 1988: 64; Cederschiöld 1884: 64. For additional examples for *óarga dýr* = 'lion', see Beck 1972: 98–101.
3. See Буслаев 1851; Ивакин 1901: 281–282; Клейненберг 1969; Сумникова 1986, with references; Топоров 1988; Савельева 1995: 189–190, with references; Королев 1998; cf. Успенский 2004: 88–105.
4. Cf.: *Þav ero orð þriú, ef sva mioc versna máls endar manna. er scog Gang varða avll. Ef maðr kallar mann ragan eða stroðiN. eða sordðiN. Oc scal sokia sem avnnor full rettis orð, enda a maðr vígt igeign þeim orðum þrimr* (Finsen 1852–1870, 2: 392; 1/2: 183–184) ['There are three words that corrupt men's speech to such an extent that they all incur outlawry. If a man calls another man *ragr* or *stroðinn* or *sorðinn*, he shall prosecute as for other

fullréttisord [gross verbal insults]. A man also has the right to kill for these three words'] (Gade 1986: 132).

5. As for the euphemistic substitution of the *wolf* in the word combinations referring to the personal names, it is appropriate to mention an episode from the poetic Edda. As it is known, the Völsungs originated from the people who, according to the legend, could turn into wolves. It is interesting that the most famous of Völsungs, Sigurðr the Dragon Slayer, who wanted to avoid the curse of the dying dragon, does not tell his name but informs that he is a noble beast — *Göfukt dýr ek heiti* (Neckel 1936: 176). Sigurðr's answer, in spite of being deliberately mysterious, apparently was understandable for the audience well acquainted with the hero's genealogy. The matter is, one of the constant nicknames of Völsungs (referred to the legend of Sigmundr and Sinfjötli) was *Ylfingar*, 'Little Wolves' or 'descendants of Wolf', cf.: *Sigmundr konungr ok hans ættmenn héto Völsungar ok Ylfingar* (Neckel 1936: 146). Thus, using an allegory, Sigurðr tells that he is of the noble family of beasts; he allegorically underlines his belonging to the family of Wolf (Breen 1999: 34–35). There is no need to remind of the important place of the wolf symbolic in the Niflungs cycle: the 'wolfish' origin of the Niflungs is actualized in the numerous details of the plot.
6. See Finnur Jónsson 1932: 351; Bertelsen 1905–1911, 1: 353. Cf. Cleasby & Vigfusson 1874: 658; Beck 1972: 101, 106, 110 footnote 24.
7. Cf. *Vargr heitir dýr; þat er rétt at kenna við blóð eða hræ svá, at kalla verð hans eða drykk; eigi er rétt at kenna svá við fleiri dýr. Vargr heitir ok úlfr...* (Finnur Jónsson 1900: 129) ['It is correct to paraphrase blood or carrion in terms of the beast which is called *vargr*, by calling them his meat and drink; it is not correct to express them in terms of other beasts. The *vargr* is also called wolf'].
8. [1.] bison; [2.] stag; [3.] elk; [4.] boar; [5.] bear; [6.] *ljutyj zver'*.
9. See Jakobson 1966: 145 lines 156–157.
10. See Nabokov 1960.

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Part IV: Function, Structure and Statistics

Function, Structure and Statistics: An Introduction

The closing section of this collection brings together four articles on methods and methodologies related to the analysis of patterns within broad corpora of data. Whereas the articles in *Culturally Sensitive Reading* were inclined to focus on specific cases or phenomena, these papers prioritize developing perspectives on the corpus or corpora as broad contextual frames. This was anticipated by Frog's usage-based approach to cultural expression in *Method in Practice*. Observing patterns of functions and structures throughout a corpus can be employed as abstract contextualizing models for individual case studies (Bradley, this volume).

This is a methodological area that atrophied in the wake of the paradigm shifts and methodological transformations that foregrounded emic readings. Highlighting specific variation produced scepticism toward generalizations about broad social patterns. Early studies were associated with these priorities, such as seeking to reconstruct 'original forms' and reveal 'universals' according to models of culture that had become untenable in the changing academic environment. The methods and goals remained associated with the methodological baggage of that earlier era and were neglected in the new environment. Ironically, this produced the methodological paradox that studies of specific variation lacked the tools for producing new models of these broad social patterns, and the social conventions in relation to which specific variation occurred often remained ambiguous and poorly defined. Rather than being opposed to case-specific studies, investigations of this type simply have a different scope and emphasis – i.e. developing perspectives on contexts rather than the situation of specific cases within those contexts. Each type of study will be primarily oriented to uses that the other is not (cf. Suenson, this volume). As these studies show, analysis of an extensive corpus does

not mean that research and analysis are divorced from cultural sensitivity, and the differences in scope make these different types of studies complementary (Bradley, this volume).

In "Categorising Christ within an Age-old Paradigm: The 'Kenning System' and Shifting Cultural Referents", Emily Osborne (Cambridge University) presents a strong opening to the section. Whereas Fjodor Uspenskij closed the last section with a discussion of particular verbal formulas associated with naming-avoidance and their changing use in a Christian environment, Osborne advances discussion to an entire (and highly flexible) system of poetic language of naming-avoidance and its adaptation following the conversion to Christianity. She contests the predominating perspective that this poetic idiom and associated conceptual system were constant and uniform. She explores the dialogic interaction of this dynamic poetic language with changing social and historical circumstances across a period of hundreds of years. She connects with Erin Michelle Goeres's discussion of the power relations between reader and editor by exposing the problematics of resolving these circumlocutions in translation. Her treatment of tensions between ambiguity and interpretation will be of interest to anyone faced with challenges of portraying idiomatic and specialized formulaic language. Osborne highlights this problem by engaging the theme of mythologies. She elucidates the ability of formulaic expressions to maintain continuity, while mythic conceptions and their world-models alter (cf. Saussure 1916 [1967]: 104–140).

Whereas the poetic idiom focused on by Osborne was characterized by verbal variation, oral poetry is far better known for stability in formulaic language. This aspect of poetic traditions has a long and prestigious history of statistical assessment in philology

(e.g. Meyer 1889; Parry 1928). On the one hand, this is because of the startling degree to which expressions associated with traditional meters can exhibit historical stability; on the other hand, traditional poets such as Homer or the unknown poet of *Beowulf* were elevated to an iconic status already in the era of Romanticism. The long-term historical continuities of poems, poetries and poetic idioms has long held a fascination, initially for accessing the archaic past, and later for understanding how oral poetry could be used, reused and even radically adapted through changing social and historical circumstances (cf. Goeres, Sykäri, this volume).

In “Poetic Formulas in Late Medieval Icelandic Folk Poetry: The Case of *Vambarljóð*”, Haukur Þorgeirsson (University of Iceland) addresses diachronic continuities across corpora documented over a period of about five centuries. He examines interactions of poetic language with the meters of different poetics systems, and also the intersections of verbal expression with semantics and pragmatics of use. He illustrates a philological method based on multi-poetic statistical surveys of formulaic language use, aspiring to an exhaustive data set (cf. Bradley, this volume). Haukur Þorgeirsson’s survey is contextualized in relation to metrical systems, poetic language use more generally, and also prose. Much as Rebecca M.C. Fisher highlighted the intersection of multimodal contexts in a specific case, this study highlights the intersection of diverse factors required for consideration when addressing the lexicon of one poetry among multiple poetries. In this process, Haukur Þorgeirsson reveals the fluidity between qualitative sensitive readings on the one hand and quantitative data on the other.

Broad surveys of data can allow insights into semiotic patterns much more complex than purely linguistic forms. Models from linguistics (esp. Saussure 1916 [1967]) have been extremely influential in structural studies and in other areas of semiotics as well, even if linguistic templates are not always fully compatible without adaptation (Sebeok 1994; cf. Frog, this volume). Among the most prominent and widely recognized approaches have been Claude Lévi-Strauss’s (e.g. 1963

[1967]) treatment of emergent cultural categories, such as binary oppositions (male–female, raw–cooked, etc.), and Vladimir Propp’s structuralist approach to narrative studies, best known through his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1958). Although the methods and theories of these structural approaches were at their inception oriented toward archetypal ideals and universals, the types of social and semiotic patterns from which they emerge have been encountered and described again and again in traditions from around the world. Their specific forms and structures are now recognized increasingly as generative rather than ideally imposed, and tradition-dependent, genre-dependent or potentially even text-dependent (cf. Foley 1988: 108–111). Whether such patterns are culturally bound, specific to small-group communities, or even exclusive to certain genres within a single culture, it is essential to recognize these sorts of frames when developing a context for specific cases.

In “A Method for Analyzing World-Models in Scandinavian Mythology”, Mathias Nordvig (University of Aarhus) returns to the theme of mythic conceptual models opened by Osborne. He engages structural approaches in narrative analysis to develop perspectives on vernacular conceptual modelling of the mythic sphere (cf. Frog, this volume). Propp’s structural approach to folktales was originally descriptive. Nordvig adapts this descriptive model in order to identify patterns in the representation of spatial relations. This necessarily engages categories functioning within patterns of representation and oppositions among them. The emerging patterns can then be interpreted as reflecting world-models insofar as narratives are structured in accordance with conceptions of the mythic world. The method outlined by Nordvig is relevant to a broad range of materials for developing broad, abstract understandings of cultural conceptions of space (cf. Lazo-Florez, this volume). This can provide a frame for approaching different aspects of specific material (cf. Latvala & Laurén, this volume). This article is an excellent example of how methods developed under an outdated methodology can be adapted to current research interests.

One of the most central themes that comes to the fore again and again in contributions to *Approaching Methodology* is situating material and interpretations within a relevant cultural context, with sensitivity to the functions, structures and broader semiotics in which a type of expression occurs. Articles repeatedly emphasize the need for developing extended contexts for approaching data of a particular phenomenon. This presents the challenge that such frames are not generally available: those that have been produced often concentrate on a single traditional 'text' like a song, tale or proverb, in isolation, or they present a dynamic picture of traditions in interaction on a highly localized level, such as a repertoire study of a single individual. Such resources are valuable, but their use in developing extended contexts is limited by their respective scopes – scopes aligned to particular methodologies and research paradigms. Developing more dynamic and extended contextualizing frames will no doubt be a protracted multidisciplinary process that will be negotiated by researchers for many decades to come (Frog, this volume). Nevertheless, this does not mean that methods for developing very broad contextualizing frames are completely unavailable.

In "A System of Techniques and Stratagems for Outlining a Traditional Ethnic Identity", Vladamir Glukhov[†] & Natalia Glukhova (Mari State University) present the model for a large-scale quantitative survey oriented to reveal a dynamic lexicon of images and symbols and correlated system of values. Together, these constitute the core or cores of cultural competence. This is an approach to ethnic identity according to a semiotic model. The semiotic model is constructed through a survey of images, symbols and values in extensive and diverse corpora of cultural material characterized as 'traditional'. Rather than focusing on propositional meanings, this survey focuses on the valuations, semantic prosody and indexical associations of images and symbols in relation to evidence of cultural attitudes and evaluations. The result can be considered generally descriptive of an essential framework for understandings within the relevant cultural group equivalent to cultural

competence. Ethnic identity is therefore approached in relation to cultural competence that exists at the level of social meanings, understandings and appraisals which cannot be literally communicated or translated across languages or cultures. In other words, participation in an ethnic identity is access to that level of the semiotic system which only those fully competent in the culture's semiotics can (intuitively) grasp and understand. The product of such a survey has tremendous potential as a reference for researchers of different fields and disciplines when approaching cultural phenomena, such as those discussed by Bradley in the beginning of this collection. It opens avenues of further exploration regarding why variation is exhibited across genres or other uses of these meaningful elements. The frame of reference it offers also has great potential for approaching limits to acceptable ranges of variation as well as exceptional variation within a corpus that could either be related to meaning-generation in synchronic contexts or be an outcome of diachronic processes (Frog, this volume).

Perhaps the most central theme of *Approaching Methodology* is the significance of developing contexts for data construction and analysis. The opening section of this collection began with articles offering widely relevant discussions of *Method in Practice*, advancing to articles concentrating on *Constructing Data* and then approaching items and cases within that data through *Culturally Sensitive Reading*. It concludes in *Function, Structure and Statistics* with the development of broader frames of reference in corpus-based surveys. It therefore seems appropriate that the collection as a whole should be brought to a close with the collection's most advanced and extensive method for developing a reference-frame in which emic cultural understandings can be cultivated and interpretations tested.

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Categorising Christ within an Age-*old* Paradigm: The 'Kenning System' and Shifting Cultural Referents

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The kenning remains one of the most recognisable and yet enigmatic components of skaldic verse. The Icelandic and Norwegian skalds of the 9th to the 14th centuries coined a vast array of individual kennings by modifying recognised types with synonyms, associated images, or allusions to myth and legend. In its most basic form, the skaldic kenning combines a base word and determinant to circumscribe a referent, which is an element described but not stated in the verse. For example, the referent 'blood' can have a base word denoting a 'liquid', with a determinant denoting a weapon, as in *vápnlauðr* ['froth of weapons'] (*Skj* B_I: 366),¹ *oddlá* ['sea of points'] (*Skj* B_I: 58), or *móða spjóta* ['river of spears'] (*Skj* B_I: 350). Synonymic or symbolic substitutions in both the base word and determinant categories allows this basic kenning type of blood as 'liquid of weapon' to have many manifestations. Blood can also be the drink or drinking well of an anthropomorphised beast of battle, as in *hrafnvín* ['raven-wine'] (*Skj* B_I: 619) or *brunnr yljar* ['fountain of the she-wolf'] (*Skj* B_I: 494), or the body of water of a corpse, as in *benþeyr* ['wound-thaw'] (*Skj* B_I: 425) or *hrælqgr* ['corpse-sea'] (*Skj* B_I: 309), which renders the corpse as a figurative land or field of battle.

Synonymic substitution and the adaptability of types allows for almost limitless expansion of kennings, as Bjarne Fidjestøl has pointed out: the base word and determinant each represent "an open class of synonym" (1997: 19), and in their combinations, a considerable number of kenning types and an even greater number of individual kennings can be produced

(Fidjestøl 1997: 31, 41). Adaptability of the kenning is advantageous in allowing skalds not only to harmonise nominal elements with the demanding metrical and alliterative requirements of intricate skaldic metres, but also to bring into association diverse spheres of reference. This vast and evolving poetic lexicon with its types and sub-types has long been referred to retrospectively as a 'system', which scholars have reconstructed into paradigms. Paradigms reveal a system of substitution which is both fixed and in flux, marked by the intersection of conformity and originality, traditional patterns and creative design. The potential for variation within the kenning system likely contributed to its longevity, just as the capacity to adapt increases the variety and longevity of species in the biological sphere. The enormous range of periphrastic diction testifies to a process of micro-evolution (see Gurevich 2002), to the effective interfacing of its inner systematic workings and its outside stimuli. As an 'adaptive system', external stimuli are constantly being exerted upon it from the individual skald's creative touch.²

Yet when more dramatic external change exerts itself upon a system, either macro-evolution or demise of the system can be stimulated. The increasing process of conversion to Christianity in Scandinavia, which began in the 8th century but which became far more pronounced by the 10th and 11th, posed this challenge to the kenning system, for Christian hermeneutics eventually brought new ways of figuring word and world. Values of *claritas* at times engendered an apparent distaste for kennings rooted in older religion, myths or cultural capital —

hulin fornyrðin [‘hidden archaisms’] as the *Lilja* poet labelled them (*Skj* B_{II}: 416) — yet skalds of the 12th to 14th centuries continued to use and adapt many older forms while simultaneously developing an explicitly Christian periphrastic lexicon modelled on the traditional linguistic structures.³ Editors of the skaldic lexicon have confronted unique challenges when categorising newer Christian kennings within traditional paradigms and when tracing their involvement with established kenning types. In the following I will outline scholarly methods of organising kennings into paradigms and of resolving them into referential equivalents, and will discuss various implications and challenges of these methods. I will then consider ways in which explicitly Christian kennings can be seen to fit, and not to fit, within traditional frameworks of the kenning system.

Kenning System Paradigms

Paradigms of the kenning system bridge the distance between words and the world, the known and the unknown, kenning and referent. The earliest extant written codification of the skaldic kenning system was produced by a prolific skald, Snorri Sturluson. In his *Skáldskaparmál* (ca. 1220) he presents kenning referents alongside exemplary kenning types by using lists and verse quotations.⁴ *Skáldskaparmál* contains prose explanations of some mythic elements and (in certain manuscript versions), a narrative frame which places the work within a mythological setting. The question-and-answer format also situates the work within contemporary learned traditions (Clunies Ross 1987). A simple quotation, followed by Anthony Faulkes’ widely-used English translation, demonstrates *Skáldskaparmál*’s format of providing referents alongside poetic periphrases:

Hvernig skal kenna orrostu? Svá at kalla
veðr vápna eða hlífa eða Óðins eða valkyrju
eða herkonunga eða gný eða glym. Svá kvað
Hornklofi:

Háði gramr, þar er gnúðu,
geira hregg við seggi,
—rauð fnýstu ben blóði—
bengoggl at dyn Skoglar.
(Faulkes 1998: 66.)

How shall battle be referred to? By calling it
weather of weapons or shield, or of Odin or
valkyrie or war-kings, or their clash or noise.
Hornklofi said this:

The prince waged storm of spears [battle]
against men where wound-goslings
[arrows] clashed in Skogul’s din. Red
wounds spewed blood.
(Faulkes 1987: 117.)

More recent paradigms and analyses of the kenning system follow *Skáldskaparmál* in bringing kennings and referents together within prose paragraphs or in lists, tables and columns. Well-known examples include Rudolph Meissner’s *Die Kenningar der Skalden* (1921), Guðbrandur Vigfússon & Frederick York Powell’s *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* (1883), Hendrik van der Merwe-Scholtz’ *The Kenning in Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Poetry* (1927), Bjarne Fidjestøl’s *Kenningssystemet* (1974; 1997), and the *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* online database. These studies differ in the extent of supplementary material provided in the form of descriptive paragraphs or explanatory notes, yet all the kenning system paradigms work to ‘reduce’ complex kennings into single-word equivalents. Generally these processes of translation and simplification are precisely delineated, as is apparent in Fidjestøl’s table of a basic ship-kenning type ‘animal of water’, where /D/ represents determinant, /B/ represents base word, and ‘S’ represents the ‘sense word’, or referent:

/D/		/B/		‘S’
		<i>hestr</i>		
/water/	+	<i>fákr</i>	=	‘ship’
		<i>Visundr</i>		

The increasing availability and digitization of such paradigms has made possible much semantic and linguistic investigation of the kenning system and of relationships between kennings and their referents: paradigms provide readers with a way into an elusive language of *hulin fornyrðin* [‘hidden archaisms’] by uncovering and categorising its rudimentary fields of reference. Paradigms obviously mediate the relationship between poetic language and audience response in many important ways – the effects of such

mediation upon the appreciation, editing and emendation of poems warrant further scrutiny. *Skáldskaparmál* rendered oral poetry into written form, couched it within scholarly discussion, and translated metaphoric language into referential language by recording kenning referents alongside base words and determinants. In the skaldic poem, the kenning holds its referent at a linguistic distance; paradigms which resolve kennings to referents bridge some of the cognitive distance generated by the skaldic form. Yet cracking the kenning code appears a far-off task for the modern reader without the cultural and linguistic landscapes which are telescoped into such paradigms, particularly where specialised mythological or cultural knowledge is required. Without a cultural or historical guide, it would often not be possible to translate from kenning language into a referential language.

How have kenning system paradigms piloted this journey from word to world? While paradigms point towards the potentially unlimited number of kennings which the kenning system can yield, they simultaneously limit and/or delimit the lexical and semantic range of the referent, reducing complex kennings into one-word equivalents. In paradigms, referents become simplices, reduced to their most basic value or semantic frame: man, woman, sword, fire, battle.⁵ It has often been noted that referents must be small in number if audiences were to decipher a wide range of kennings. Thus, Meissner finds that most kennings can be referred to just over one hundred cultural or semantic categories of referents. Considering referents as simply as possible aids understanding of the 'literal' meaning of a skaldic stanza or the topical situation it describes, such as the battle in Þorbjörn Hornklofi's stanza quoted above. Further steering modern audiences towards this literal meaning is the standard practice of resolving kennings within translations or modern editions of skaldic stanzas; the 'translation' of kennings into referents is in turn informed by paradigms and the resolution of kennings contained within the *Lexicon Poeticum antiquae linguae septentrionalis* of Sveinbjörn Egilsson & Finnur Jónsson (1931). The process of

kenning resolution evident in Faulkes' English translation of Þorbjörn's stanza, which resolves the kennings *hregg geira* ['storm of arrows'] and *bengogll* ['wound-goslings'], not only attests to a comparative loss of familiarity with skaldic diction (knowledge of which had apparently already declined in Snorri's time, judging by his systematic presentation; Quinn 1994: 72–73), but also self-consciously reflects upon the reconstructed system with which the verse dialogues. Modern translations of skaldic verse frequently include only referents and no actual kennings, particularly in the case of kennings based on more familiar or simpler types. For instance, Finnur Jónsson translates a line from Eyvindr skáldaspillir Finnsson's *Hákonarmál*, *svarraði sárgymir / á sverða nesi* ['wound-sea answered on the sword's headland'] (*Skj B*: 58.5–6) as "blodströmmen bruste på skjoldene" ['currents of blood roared on the shield'], half-resolving the blood-kenning *sárgymir* into the more literal compound 'blood-currents' and fully resolving the shield-kenning *sverða nes* into its referential equivalent. When a translation such as this is accomplished, how should related verbal elements including verbs and adjectives be rendered? Marold (1983: 62–66) and Sverdlov (2003) have discussed ways in which other verbal elements interact semantically with kennings or influence their formation. In the case of Eyvindr's image, the semantic and symbolic capacity of *svarraði* rests in an implicit connection between the corpse as an element of the battle's landscape (which subsequently accesses the related blood-kenning type as the body of water of a corpse), which contains a sea of blood that laps and echoes against another part of the landscape of battle, the sword's 'headland' (shield). Corpse, sea and land also converge in the mythological resonance of *gymir*, a derivative of the giant-name *Gymir*, for the bodies of giants appear as integral components of universal creation throughout *Gylfaginning*, eddic verse and skaldic diction. Finnur's translation of *svarraði* as *bruste* ['roared'] retains the image of conversation and the aural potential of *strömme*, yet the imagistic harmony between corpse and shield as natural bodies in the battle's landscape is

deactivated by resolution of *sverða nes* to ‘shield’ and *sárgymir* to ‘currents of blood’.

Translating skaldic verse into a modern language becomes a two-stage process, from Old Norse to the target language and from periphrastic language to referential language, which offers many routes along the journey between word and world. The second stage of translation is usually noted in close proximity to verse in order to aid reader accessibility, through parenthetical insertions or side-notes as opposed to spatially removed footnotes. The new editions produced by the Skaldic Editing Project (volumes II and VII) have adopted mathematical symbols to refine a procedure of kenning resolution, as for instance in these examples from the skald Einarr Skúlason:

1. *harri hauðrtjalda*: lord of earth-tents
[SKY/HEAVEN > = God (= Christ)]
(Clunies Ross et al. 2007: 22–23)
2. *hauka fróns leyghati*: hater of the flame of the hawks’ land
[lit. ‘flame-hater of the hawks’ land’]
ARM > GOLD > GENEROUS MAN]
(Gade et al. 2009: 540–541)

The referent appears in square brackets. Majuscles indicate traditional kenning referents while minuscules with ‘=’ sign indicate the names of deities and other persons. Example (1) is what is known as a *tvíkennt* [‘twice-named’] kenning, because one of its determinants has been expanded into a kenning. The referent of this internal kenning is represented first, because it must be resolved before the referent of the entire kenning can be discerned. Progression from one kenning to another is indicated by the ‘>’ sign. Example (2) is known as a *rekit* [‘driven’] kenning; in this construction, two or more determinants or base words are expanded into kennings. The ability to extend kennings internally unsurprisingly increases the number of their types and their cross-references within the kenning system. Referential ambiguity or plurality simultaneously increases, distancing the real-world referent and its semantic frame from the audience’s cognitive grasp.⁶ Cognitive distance from word to world is a focal point of studies which explore: correspondences between kennings and riddles (Lindow 1975);

abstractions created by metaphor and metonymy;⁷ and ways in which cognitive linguistics and conceptual blending theories can elucidate the mind’s play between a kenning and its referent.⁸ In contrast, kenning paradigms and systematic methods of kenning resolution and translation in turn bring these two spheres into closer connection.

As referents of metaphors (or their semantic frames) are not normally reproduced within poetic editions or translations (compare modern editions of British metaphysical verse or Homeric hymns which also employ elaborate conceits and periphrases), established methods of translating the skaldic poetic lexicon within the verse are unusual in the degree to which they paraphrase periphrases. Translating or resolving kennings refers the reader to the kenning system and its paradigms, acknowledging a governing body within which a kenning operates and anticipating an audience’s response to a poem; at the same time, kenning translation can alter or disguise the symbolic substrata of a type, as is evident in Finnur Jónsson’s above translation. This essentially egocentric method of relating the words we find in poetry to the world we see around us is further complicated by the fact that the cultural value of a referent’s semantic frame must adapt over time: a corpse’s significance could vary among different religious belief structures. While the kenning language system may have operated within a remarkably similar framework over centuries, the cultural categories to which it referred naturally shifted, especially in the context of the socio-literary changes engendered by the conversion to Christianity in Scandinavia. As such, many Christian kennings resist defined categorisation and resolution within patterns established for older ones.

Kenning Paradigms and Cultural Context

Kenning system paradigms differ in the degree of explanation provided for a kenning’s external context and its mythological or cultural allusions. *Skáldskaparmál* incorporates many narratives, frames and explanatory asides which situate kennings within mythological, religious, social or literary contexts. In the *Corpus*

Poeticum Boreale, Guðbrandur Vigfússon & Powell frequently enlarge upon a kenning's social constitution. Bragi inn gamli's kenning for 'shield', *salpenningr* ['hall-coin']:

calls up the picture of the long smoke-darkened wooden hall, set round with tables and benches, crowded by a goodly crew of merchant-adventurers, and filled by the merry sounds of the clinking can, blithe talk, and laughter, while the light of torch and hearth plays upon the long row of glittering brazen targets that deck the walls above their owners' heads. (Guðbrandur Vigfússon & Powell 1883: 450.)

Die Kenningar includes explanatory notes on mythological and cultural phenomena, in spite of Meissner's attempt to distance his study from such ethno-cultural horizons:

Mein Buch ist eine systematische, nicht eine historisch-kritische Darstellung der Kenningar. Es soll ein Hilfsmittel zur Bearbeitung der großen Aufgaben sein, die der Philologie auf diesem Gebiete gestellt sind, es ist aber auch zur Ehre der noch immer verkannten Skaldendichtung geschrieben. (Meissner 1921: vii.)

My book is a systematic, and not a historical-critical, presentation of kenningar. It is intended to be an auxiliary tool for resolving the fundamental tasks which philology is confronted with in this subject area; it is, however, also written for the honour of the still not widely acclaimed skaldic poetry.

Paradigms of the kenning system can give the appearance that they are objective and systematic presentations, organised categorically by the lexical value, and not necessarily by the cosmological or semantic boundaries, of the referent. However, the very organisation of kenning types and referents into stemmas, catalogues and categories can expose underlying assumptions about the ways in which poetic terms relate to culture. Here, an observation made by Clunies Ross over twenty years ago still rings true:

What we lack so far is a definitive study of the deeper structures of Old Norse skaldic poetics which focuses on the cultural categories and cognitive models that underlie the groupings of kenning types into

like and unlike sets. (Clunies Ross 1989: 272.)

What effects do the paradigmatic arrangements of Snorri, Meissner and Guðbrandur Vigfússon & Powell have upon readers' and editors' perception of the kennings therein and in turn upon the interpretation, translation or emendation of verses?

The juxtaposition of kenning types or referents within paradigms encourages readers to find affinity between those groups. The *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, *Die Kenningar* and the different manuscript versions of *Skáldskaparmál* frequently arrange referents and kenning types by tacit socio-religious similarities, although the online Skaldic Editing Project database of kenning referents departs from these models in organising referents alphabetically. In *Die Kenningar*, heaven-kennings follow sky-kennings, God-kennings follow man-kennings, kennings for holy women and the Virgin Mary follow woman-kennings, and church-kennings follow house-kennings. Conceptual continuity may exist between these historical individuals and cosmological and social spaces, and it is thus more surprising to note that lexical similarity does not necessarily follow suit; for instance, the church-kennings Meissner lists are not closely linked with house-kenning models (Meissner 1921: 430–432), nor are most periphrases for the Virgin Mary similar to traditional woman kennings (Meissner 1921: 395ff., 423ff.). *Skáldskaparmál*'s hierarchy is also frequently based upon connections between things, as opposed to between the ways in which kennings represent things.⁹ For example, sky-, earth- and sea-kennings are juxtaposed, and for each of these cosmological spaces the first kenning types catalogued are those based on the myth of cosmic creation from the body of the giant Ymir, followed by those based on familial relations of gods, and then by those based on symbolic relations with other natural environments: sky as 'sun's land', earth as 'sky's floor', sea as 'ships' land' (Faulkes 1998: 35–38; Clunies Ross 1987: 119ff.). There are points at which *Skáldskaparmál*'s close paralleling leaves common kenning types unaccounted for, as becomes apparent

in the juxtaposition of man- and woman-kennings. *Skáldskaparmál* contains woman-kennings which conform to models already established for man-kennings (where woman is the ‘prop’, ‘tree’, ‘distributor’ or ‘goddess’ of gold, jewellery or mead, as man is the ‘pillar’, ‘tree’, ‘trier’ or ‘god’ of weapons or gold) (Faulkes 1998: 62–66; Clunies Ross 1987: 107–110); this careful paralleling excludes a large class of woman-kennings which do not derive, like Eve from Adam’s rib, from man-kennings. Base words denoting ‘land’, ‘ground’ or ‘earth’, are used exclusively in woman-kennings, even though parts of both men’s and women’s bodies can be identified in this manner (the arm, for example, might be ‘ground of rings’).¹⁰ The causes and effects of this distinction in the kenning system have not been thoroughly considered, as far as I am aware, perhaps due to the lasting influence of *Skáldskaparmál*’s organisation. Meissner (1921: 399, 409) explains the woman-kenning type as a natural outgrowth of kenning categories included elsewhere in *Skáldskaparmál*: the goddess name *Jörð*, used as a base word in woman-kennings, has a synonym in the noun *jörð* ‘earth’, and *Jörð* the goddess in turn can personify the earth in land-kennings (Faulkes 1998: 35, 485). However, considering the extent of nature metaphors in body- and people-kennings (Nordal 2001: 271ff.), the frequency with which ‘land’ base words occur in woman-kennings and *Jörð*’s problematic and complex position within the Norse pantheon (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2008; Clunies Ross 1987: 120–123), the situation merits further exploration.

Categorising and Translating Christian Kennings within the ‘System’

Adopting one method of writing out kenning referents with parenthetical equivalents and/or by symbolic designation fosters clarity, but it gives the impression that all kennings have very similar semantic relationships with their referents, regardless of a kenning’s use of metaphor, metonymy or *nomen agentis*, the kenning’s rhetorical function within a stanza, or that stanza’s topical agenda (encomia for a king, record of a saint’s life, or *níð* [‘defamation’]). While the kenning’s

fundamental structure and the way in which skalds constructed kennings off pre-existing types persisted, it is quite possible that the perceived relationship of periphrasis to referent, word to world, changed according to kenning type (*tvíkennt*, *rekit*, *nomen agentis*, metaphoric, etc.). One area in which this kind of change can be discerned lies in the influence of Christian hermeneutics and foreign literary traditions on later skalds. While the pre-Snorrian picture of the involvement between the periphrastic and the real remains for us in shadows, knowledge of Christian exegesis brings later connections between word and world into sharper focus (Nordal 2001: 199ff.). The typological view of scripture (in which Old Testament words and events foreshadowed those in the New) came to shape the hermeneutic approach to non-scriptural history and literature. If God was author of the Bible and also history, symbols and allegories could represent truth and actualities in manifold ways. ‘Allegory’ and ‘symbol’ were no longer terms reserved for words alone (the *allegoria verbis*), but they could also describe events (the *allegoria factis*) which could themselves point towards other events within divine history. Widely-disseminated discourse, such as *De doctrina christiana* of Augustine, reformulated the Word/world hierarchy, and the world became a text inscribed by God. Parish and Episcopal schools in Iceland (notably at Skálholt, Haukadalr and Oddi) appear to have taught similar curricula to those employed in western European schools (Chase 2005a: 204–205; Chase 2005b: 15; Nordal 2001: 77ff.); it is therefore no surprise that scholars have found evidence of allegory and typology in diverse genres of Icelandic texts from the 12th to the 14th centuries, for example in the Old Icelandic Book of Homilies, *Physiologus*, *Rauðúlfs þáttr* and skaldic verse such as Níkulás Bergsson’s *Kristsdrápa* or Einarr Skúlason’s *Geisli*.¹¹

Christianity obviously created the need for new semantic categories for kennings, a subject which Guðrún Nordal (2001), Margaret Clunies Ross (1987) and Katrina Attwood (2005) have examined in depth (see also Chase 2005b: 20). Yet the ways in which Christian skalds used traditional elements of

the system to compose kennings with new cultural resonance deserves more attention. Christian skalds composed their periphrases both by building on established kennings (as is evident in Einarr's kenning for God, *harri hauðrtjalda*, which contains a sky-kenning within it) and by employing calques of foreign metaphors (for example in calling Mary *ker miskunnar* ['the vessel of mercy'] (*Skj* B_{II}: 499). In this dual capacity, we might see many Christian skaldic kennings or periphrases as expressing a kind of typological exegesis of traditional kennings, by combining new concepts and older exemplars; within the self-referencing mechanics familiar to skalds, time-honoured phrases were employed in the service of expressing a new worldview. Typological study of semantic evolution in the kenning system can be compared to Elena Gurevich's (2002) study of evolving kenning patterns and to Fjodor Uspenskij's (this volume) typological analysis of the Norse compound *óargr dýr*.

The organisation of *Die Kenningar* draws attention to the ways in which many Christian referents relate to similar non-Christian cultural constructs, revealing where the kennings themselves are or are not rooted in previous kenning constructs. Guðbrandur Vigfússon & Powell (1883: 486ff.), however, group many Christian kennings together, isolating them by the cultural value of their referents. Each method points towards a meaningful aspect of kenning construction. Although Meissner's taxonomy can reveal the self-referencing mechanisms of an evolving system, it does not emphasise practical usage of these Christian kennings, as for instance in *tvíkennt* or *rekit* constructions. For instance, while earlier sky-kennings tend to be simple compounds, heaven-kennings are mostly incorporated into periphrases for God, angels and saints, and more rarely appear in verse to designate the cosmological sphere of the sky alone. Thus while Meissner's organisation emphasises linguistic similarities and differences between the construction of sky- and heaven-kennings, the skaldic heaven gains much of its character from its lexical and referential association with God and other supernatural or apotheosised subjects, a fact

better seen through analysis of kennings in context and through comparison among Christian kennings, as the organisation of the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* encourages. Christian kennings are both married to and divorced from their pre-Christian counterparts; attention to context, in addition to content, is particularly important when working within a 'pre-Christian/Christian' framework, as Rebecca M.C. Fisher's (this volume) study of the editing of Anglo-Saxon charms makes clear.

The appropriate means of categorising Christian referents within traditional kenning paradigms was apparently a contemporary issue. In a well-known passage from *Skáldskaparmál*, Snorri explores referential ambiguity occurring where Christ-kennings overlap with established kenning forms. Quoting an Arnórr járlaskald *helmingr* in which Christ is *vörðr Grikkja ok Garða* ['protector of Greeks and Russians'] and an Eilífr kúlnasveinn fragment in which he is *stillir hölða* ['ruler of men'] and *konungr alls* ['king of all'], Snorri writes:

Par koma saman kenningar, ok verðr sá at skilja af stoð, er ræðr skáldskapinn, um hvárn kveðit er konunginn, þvíat rétt er at kalla Miklagarðs keisara Grikkja konung, ok svá þann konung er ræðr Jórsalalandi, at kalla Jórsala konung, svá ok at kalla Róms konung Rómaborgar keisara eða Engla konung þann er Englandi ræðr. En sú kenning er áðr var ritat, at kalla Krist konung manna, þá kenning má eiga hvern konungr. Konunga alla er rétt at kenna svá at kalla þá landráðendr eða lands vörðu eða lands sœki eða hirðstjóra eða vörð landsfólks. (Faulkes 1998: 78.)

Here kennings come together, and the one who is interpreting the poetry must determine from the situation which king is being spoken about, because it is correct to call the emperor of Constantinople the 'king of the Greeks', and likewise to call the king who governs Jerusalem, 'king of Jerusalem', and also to call 'king of Rome' the Roman emperor or 'king of England' the one who rules England. And that kenning which was written before, which calls Christ 'king of men', that kenning can refer to any king. It is correct to name all kings so as to call them 'rulers of land' or 'guardian of country' or

‘invader of land’ or ‘guardian of the people of the land’.

How exactly do kennings *koma saman* [‘come together’]? Plurality of referents seems to be involved in Snorri’s example because many classes of kennings are generically representative but can also be used indicatively depending on context (Amory 1982: 74–75). Christ-kennings, as Snorri’s example implies, can be ambiguous in the translation of word to world, for the audience’s perception of the cultural location of kenning referents must evolve over time (Quinn 1994: 75).

Kennings for heaven also frequently involve referential and cultural ambiguity and test the limits of resolving and categorising kenning referents. For Einarr’s kenning *hauðrtjald* [‘earth-tent’] quoted above, it is possible to conceive of the internal referent as either ‘sky’ or ‘heaven’ because the kenning is of a long-standing sky-kenning type (which figures it as a ‘building’ for earth, celestial bodies or weather phenomena), yet it also exists within a God-kenning in a Christian poem. By exposing its place within the kenning system, a kenning assimilates the semantic value of existing kenning types even as it points towards an external referent (‘the king’ > ‘Christ’). The editors of the *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages* Volume VII have chosen the designation ‘SKY/HEAVEN’ to encompass an aspect of this duality. Yet the kenning system also attests to much subtler networks of meaning within the heavenly sphere (Nordal 2001: 285ff.), as is suggested by a comparison of *harri hauðrtjald* [‘lord of the earth-tent’], *holl guðs* [‘hall of God’] (*Skj* B_{II}: 589), and *stillir stjörnu hallar* [‘ruler of the star-hall’] (*Skj* B_{II}: 509). These kennings subsume the space of the pre-Christian sky into Christian designations and concepts, in typological fashion.

While linguistic reflexes may resound clearly within these kennings, the ideological orchestration between sky, heaven, God and his hall is less audible. The sky-as-building metaphor has foundations in both pre-Christian skaldic kennings and typological readings of scripture. Designations like ‘courts of the lord’ and ‘house of God’ appear

throughout the Bible (Psalm 84:2; Psalm 92:13), but the location about which they speak is not circumscribed more specifically. Referential plurality is advantageous in a typological interpretation of scripture, in which ‘God’s house’ or ‘God’s tent’ are conceptually related to other structures such as the tabernacle, the tent of meeting in Exodus, Solomon’s temple, the church and the individual believer. Similarly, many kenning types have multiple symbolic reverberations within the kenning system. A sky-kenning like *holl guðs* shares common ground with church-kennings such as *goðs hús* [‘God’s house’] (*Skj* B_{II}: 33) and *dróttins hús* [‘the lord’s house’] (*Skj* B_{II}: 450), or with periphrases for the Virgin Mary and her womb as *herbergi guðs* [‘God’s lodging’] (*Skj* B_{II}: 413), *höll himna drottins* [‘hall of the lord of the sky’] (*Skj* B_{II}: 387), *skrín þengils sólar* [‘shrine of the prince of the sun’] (*Skj* B_{II}: 372) and *höll Krists* [‘hall of Christ’] (Clunies Ross et al. 2007: 534). Heaven, the church and Mary’s womb may all be ‘home’ from God’s perspective, yet resolving to ‘heaven’, ‘church’ or ‘womb’ orients the kenning towards the audience’s angle of perception. Clarification in this instance circumnavigates the artistry of the Christian kenning: as referential plurality was crucial to the typological system, *claritas* may have provided only a thin veil to cover the old with the new.

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Notes

1. References following this format are to Finnur Jónsson’s edited (B) volumes of skaldic poetry, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*.
2. Concepts of kenning adaptation as a reflex of culture may usefully be compared with the contribution of Frog (this volume) on the Parallax Approach.
3. See Lie 1952: 78; Meissner 1922: 48–49; Lindow 1982: 119–120; Clunies Ross 2005: 114–140; Attwood 2005.
4. The categorical component of *Skáldskaparmál* (also apparent in the roughly contemporary text *Litla Skálda*) was likely influenced by established Norse genres of lexical list like the *þulur* (Gurevich 1992: 36; Clunies Ross 1987: 80ff.; 2005: 31, 172; Finnur Jónsson 1931: xlviii–xlix; Faulkes, 1998: xvi;

- Jesch, 2009: 450ff.; Nordal 2001: 288; Faulkes 1998: xiii–xiv).
5. Holland 2005: 139–142; Clunies Ross 1989: 275–276; on frame semantics, see Fillmore 1976; Petrucci 1996; Goddard 1998; Boas 2006.
 6. Other types of poetic irony also create referential ambiguity, for example the poetic punning known as *ofljóst* [‘too clear’], which involves word-play on near-homonyms differing in vowel-length (for example *fár* for ‘anger’ and *far* for ‘ship’; *lið*, which can denote ‘people’, ‘ship’, or ‘ale’ (also *lið*); Faulkes 1998: 109).
 7. Fidjestøl 1974; 1997; Holland 2005; Krömmelbein 1983; Amory 1988; 1997.
 8. Bergsveinn Birgisson 2008; Orton 2007; Holland 2005; Sullivan 2008; Clunies Ross 1989 contains an earlier overview of cognitive approaches to skaldic poetics.
 9. On the content-related organisation of *Skáldskaparmál*, see Clunies Ross 1987; Frog 2009: 271–272, 277.
 10. These woman-kennings are of course related to the *ofljóst* punning on the goddess Jörð, with her homonym *jörð*, ‘earth’.
 11. Lindblad 1976; Loeschner 1981; Louis-Jensen 1981; Chase 2005a: 208–216; Chase 2005b: 27, 35. While the medieval Icelandic grammatical treatises, including Snorri’s *Skáldskaparmál* (Faulkes 1998: 41, 74, 108) and *Háttatal* (Faulkes 1999: 7) and Óláfr hvítaskáld Þórðarson’s *Third Grammatical Treatise* (Finnur Jónsson 1927: 56) attest to an indigenous Norse poetic device with affinities to allegory (called *nýgervingar* [‘new-creations’]), it appears to be quite different from Christian framings of the symbolic and allegorical. *Nýgervingar* is an extended metaphor, but overall a phenomenon with significance localised to a stanza or poem. It is worth noting that Óláfr was obviously well-schooled in both Christian and Classical literary traditions and Snorri likely was as well (Clunies Ross 2005: 157, 185–202; Nordal 2001: 46–72).
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Poetic Formulas in Late Medieval Icelandic Folk Poetry: The Case of *Vambarljóð*

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A group of alliterative poems recorded from oral tradition in late 17th century Iceland share textual similarities or poetic formulas with each other and with older poetry in similar meters, including poems in the *Poetic Edda*. The present article contains a survey of the

poetic formulas in one such poem, *Vambarljóð*. Using a simple comparative method, I attempt to identify which poems share the greatest formulaic affinity with the poem under study. The article explores the reason why *Vambarljóð* shares formulas with

older poetry and argues in favor of a continuous oral tradition rather than learned borrowings.

The sagnakvæði

In the second half of the 17th century there was a new development in the history of Icelandic poetry. Starting in the Western Fjords, members of the intellectual elite came to be interested in collecting folk poetry and committing it to writing. The collectors classified the poems they were writing down as *fornkvæði* ['old poems']. These were poems of unknown authorship, circulating in an oral tradition as entertainment for the common people. Most of the poems in the *fornkvæði* collections are ballads, usually translated from Scandinavian ballads which are still otherwise extant in some form. Many of the ballads must have reached Iceland no later than the 15th century and then spent a couple of centuries circulating in the oral tradition (Vésteinn Ólason 1982).

The Icelandic ballad collections, however, also contain poems with no parallel on the continent, namely poems in the eddic *fornyrðislag* meter. These poems, referred to as *sagnakvæði* ['folktale poems'], share with the ballads proper a certain feminine sensibility and taste and seem to have co-existed with them in the oral tradition.

There are only eight¹ preserved *sagnakvæði*, all published in 1898 but little studied since then. In previous articles I have examined two *sagnakvæði* in some detail; *Gullkársljóð* and *Þóruljóð* (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2010; 2011). On the basis of metrical and linguistic criteria, I argued that these two poems are relatively early, perhaps originally composed in the 14th century. This is not to say that the 17th century versions we now have are 14th century texts in pristine condition; allowances must be made for changes in the process of oral transmission.

One striking aspect of the *sagnakvæði*, which I have until now not examined in any detail, is the prevalence of textual similarities or formulas within and between individual poems. As a start to coming to grips with this, I would like to examine the potential use of formulas in one poem, *Vambarljóð*.

Vambarljóð and Its Manuscripts

Vambarljóð tells a fairy-tale about a princess named Signý. She is cursed by her stepmother and transformed into a cow's stomach. To break the curse she uses magic and cunning to force a prince into marrying her.

The poem is published in Ólafur Davíðsson's 1898 collection of folk poetry but the edition is not reliable (Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir 1997) so I have made a new study of the manuscripts.

The manuscripts NKS 1141 fol (=V₁) and JS 405 4^{to} (=V₂) are faithful copies of the same lost manuscript, referred to by Jón Helgason as V (Jón Helgason 1960: 39–41). The V manuscript was written in 1699–1700. It is not clear whether the scribe of V recorded *Vambarljóð* directly from oral tradition or whether he followed a written source. In the V version, the poem consists of 62 stanzas. There is a copy of the V₁ text of *Vambarljóð* in JS 406 4^{to}.

The manuscript Thott 489 8^{vo} (=T) contains a copy of the first three strophes of *Vambarljóð* (=T₁) and then a full copy of the poem (=T₂), consisting of 70 strophes. What seems to have happened here is that the scribe had access to two versions of the poem. He began to write down one but after three strophes he decided that the other version was more suitable for his purposes and started over. The text he now decided to use as his base seems to have been derived from V. But on several occasions he referred back to his first source and took additional strophes and some variants from there, thus producing a hybrid text.

The manuscript NKS 1894 4^{to} (=N) preserves a recording of the poem from oral tradition made for Árni Magnússon. The informant was *afgömul kerling, móðir Guðmundar Bergþórssonar* ['an ancient woman, the mother of Guðmundur Bergþórsson'] (NKS 1894 4^{to}, p. 154). Guðmundur Bergþórsson (1657–1705) was a major *rímur* poet. His mother appears in the Icelandic census of 1703 under the name Þorbjörg Guðmundsdóttir, born in 1636. According to the scant sources available, she was a poor woman and a lover of poetry. Her son spoke kindly of her in his poetry (Finnur Sigmondsson 1947).

The recording of the poem in N consists of only 27 strophes. It is introduced with a few sentences in prose and has some rather abrupt transitions compared to the more extensive recordings in V and T. Nevertheless, it is recognizably the same poem. The manuscripts JS 581 4^{to} and Lbs 202 8^{vo} contain the same text and are probably derived from N.

According to Jón Þorkelsson (1888: 208), the manuscript JS 398 4^{to} contains a version of *Vambarljóð* whose first few verses he cites. Those are similar (but not identical) to the text in T₁. Ólafur Davíðsson also lists this manuscript as containing a copy of *Vambarljóð*. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find any trace of the poem here. Nor is the manuscript listed as containing the poem in the manuscript catalogue (Páll Eggert Ólason 1935–1937: 411). A possible explanation is that Jón got JS 398 4^{to} confused with T and then quoted T₁ somewhat imprecisely. The catalogue does list Lbs 2033 4^{to}, a collection of materials belonging to Jón Þorkelsson, as containing *Vambarljóð* but the relevant part of the collection is on loan abroad and I have not been able to access it yet.

There is another, longer, poem called *Vambarljóð* preserved in Lbs 985 4^{to} and AM 154 8^{vo} (there is a copy of the latter in NKS 1894 4^{to}). Both manuscripts are defective. This poem tells the same story as the previous one and in the same meter but there are almost no textual similarities. I regard it as a separate work and will not discuss it further here. There are two 18th century *rímur* cycles based on this version, one by Þórður Pálsson (ÍB 895 8^{vo} and Lbs 2324 4^{to}) and one by Helgi Bjarnason (Lbs 985 4^{to} and JS 579 4^{to}).

It is not my objective here to date *Vambarljóð* but it is worth noting that linguistically and metrically the poem, as it has come down to us, seems less archaic than either *Gullkársljóð* or *Þóruljóð*. As we shall see, however, it does have a significant number of textual similarities to old poetry.

I use the complete text of *Vambarljóð* in T₂ as a basis for my investigation below. Variants from V, N and T₁ are mentioned as occasions seem to warrant. For convenience, I normalize the spelling but I make no attempt to archaize it.

Formulas and Other Textual Similarities

In what follows I will seek to list instances of textual similarities between verses in *Vambarljóð* and other texts. In cases where two poems have a similar choice of words there are, generally speaking, several possibilities. Some of them are:

1. The choice of words originated with the first poem. The poet who composed the second poem knew the first poem and borrowed the phrasing from it, whether consciously or unconsciously.
2. The choice of words originated with a poem that is now lost. Both the extant poems borrowed from that lost poem.
3. The phrasing was in wide circulation but only the two instances in question happen to be preserved.
4. Two poets coincidentally hit upon the same phrasing.

Generally speaking, I do not think there are any effective methods available for distinguishing between possibilities (1), (2) and (3). For my purposes here, I think such a distinction is not necessary and for convenience, I will refer to all non-coincidental textual similarities between two strophes as poetic formulas.

I agree with Joseph Harris that traditionally:

Eddic scholarship seems to have overestimated the individual borrowings and undervalued the force of collective tradition, especially at the level of lexical choice and phrasing. (Harris 2008: 211.)

A research program that puts its main focus on supposed borrowings and allusions, as if we were working with modern written literature, will quickly find itself on tenuous ground. Bernt Øyvind Thorvaldsen (2008) shows this convincingly for the case of *Þrymskviða*.

Oral-formulaic theory offers a counterbalance to the traditional focus on borrowings and allusions but I am not attempting to apply oral theory to the Icelandic material (for work in that vein see Gísli Sigurðsson 1990, for a recent overview of the study of orality in Old Norse verse, see Frog 2011). The present survey is concerned with relationships of verbal elements across

texts and the relevance of these relationships for the composition in and continuities of the poetic idiom rather than flexibility and variation of that idiom in the process of reproduction by a single performer or as a historical process of transmission from one performer to the next.²

For my purposes here, I define a formula operationally as ‘a combination of words found at least twice in texts using a poetic register but not elsewhere’. I sometimes relax this to require only one identical word if the semantic or structural context is otherwise similar. I have thus cast a fairly wide net and included some textual similarities which could be coincidental. My definition would allow many kennings to be included as formulas but I will nevertheless consider kennings in a separate section.

When searching for formulas in *Vambarljóð*, I read the poem through line by line and searched for phrases and individual words in an electronic concordance which I have assembled containing most Icelandic poetry prior to 1550 and a selection of younger poems. When I found similarities that seemed interesting I typically followed up the words involved in dictionaries and commentaries. *The Dictionary of Old Norse Prose (ONP)* and *Ritmálssafn Orðabókar Háskólans* were particularly useful. I also used Google and Google Books, as a quick way to find possible prose occurrences.

Formulas in Multiple Texts

In what follows, I will list the possible formulas that I have been able to find in *Vambarljóð*. We will start with formulas that occur in more than two texts; I will label those formulas with the prefix M.

Formula M1

Vambarljóð 67.3–4 (*Pulur* 54):³
 en eg mun skunda / til skipa ofan
 [‘and I will hurry down to the ships’]

Orvar-Odds saga IX.13.1–2 (*Skj B_{II}*: 327):
 Réðum skunda / til skipa ofan
 [‘we hurried down to the ships’]

Gullkársljóð 31.3–4 (*Pulur* 79):⁴
 verð eg að skunda / til skipa ofan
 [‘I must hurry down to the ships’]

Kringilneffjukvæði 18.3–4 (*Pulur* 41):
 þú skalt skunda / til skipa ofan
 [‘you shall hurry down to the ships’]

Kringilneffjukvæði 19.1–2 (*Pulur* 41):
 skunda eg ekki / til skipa ofan
 [‘I will not hurry down to the ships’]

Kringilneffjukvæði 22.1–2 (*Pulur* 42):
 skundar hún síðan / til skipa ofan
 [‘then she hurries down to the ships’]

Bryngerðarljóð 37.3–4 (*Pulur* 88):
 skundað hefir skjöldungur / til skipa sinna
 [‘the king has hurried to his ships’]

Hervararkviða 15.7–8 (*Skj B_{II}*: 266):
 skynt mæ ef mátt / til skipa þinna
 [‘hurry, maiden, if you can, to your ships’]

This formula (previously discussed in Haukur Þorgeirsson 2010: 320–321) occurs in four of the *sagnakvæði* and also in two poems in the legendary sagas. The word *skunda* is common in the *rímur* but it rarely alliterates with *skip* and the instances which I am aware of do not appear to be a part of this formulaic system. The instances are:

Úlfhams rímur V.21.3 (*Rímnasafn* II: 158):⁵
 skunda af hafinu skip svó fríð
 [‘the ships so fair hurry from the sea’]

Pontus rímur I.59.3 (Magnús Jónsson et al. 1961: 11):
 af skipunum tólf þeir skunda hratt
 [‘they hurry quickly from the twelve ships’]

Formula M2

Vambarljóð 57.3 (*Pulur* 52),
Kötludraumur 44.3 (*Pulur* 10),
Bryngerðarljóð 9.2 (*Pulur* 85),
Bryngerðarljóð 10.2 (*Pulur* 85),
Bryngerðarljóð 57.3 (*Pulur* 90):
 svinn seima Bil
 [‘the wise Bil of gold’]

The kenning *seima Bil* occurs in a strophe in *Vqlsa þáttur* (*Skj B_{II}*: 237) and some 15 times in the medieval *rímur*. In three of those fifteen cases it is combined with the adjective *svinnr*:

Ölvis rímur III.58.3 (*Ölvis rímur*):
 svinna seima Bil
 [‘the wise Bil of gold’]

Konráðs rímur II.52.1 (Wisén 1881: 110):
 svinnust seima Bil
 [‘the wisest Bil of gold’]

Landrís rímur II.70.3 (*Rímnasafn* II: 407):
svinnri gef eg það seima Bil
[‘I will give it to the wise Bil of gold’]

Although these could be regarded as instances of the same formula, it should be kept in mind that the word *svinnur* is very common in the *rímur* and alliterates conveniently with kennings including the common *seima* element. Instances can be found of:

svinnur + *seima þöll*
svinnur + *seima grund*
svinnur + *seima Ná*
svinnur + *seima brú*
svinnur + *seima rjóðr*
svinnur + *seima Týr* – etc.

In contrast, *seima Bil* occurs nowhere in the *sagnakvæði* apart from the instances listed above and in all five instances the phrase *svinn seima Bil* covers a single verse. This seems sufficient to regard it as a formula rather than coincidence.

Formula M3

Vambarljóð 7.1–4 (*Þulur* 47):

Hér sit eg hjá þér / og sjá þykjunst
að munir, siklingur, / fyrir svikum verða.
[‘I sit here by you and I seem to see that
you, king, will be afflicted by deception’]

Helgakviða Hundingsbana II 40.1–2 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 159):

Hvárt ero þat svic ein, / er ec síá þicciomz ... ?
[‘Is that only a deception, which I seem to
see?’]

Helgakviða Hundingsbana II 41.1–2 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 159):

Era þat svic ein, / er þú síá þicciz
[‘It is not only a deception which you seem
to see’]

Bryngerðarljóð 11.1–2 (*Þulur* 85):

Hér sit eg hjá þér / og sjá þykjunst
[‘I sit here by you and I seem to see’]

Bryngerðarljóð 60.5–6 (*Þulur* 91):

Segðu hið sanna til / því eg sjá þykist
[‘Tell the truth about this because I seem to
see’]

Grípisspá 8.1–4 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 165):

Segðu, gegn konungr, / gerr, enn ec spyria,
snotr, Sigurði, / ef þú síá þicciz

[‘Virtuous and wise king, tell in more detail
than I can ask to Sigurðr, if you seem to
see’]

Grípisspá 30.3–4 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 168):

segðu, Grípir, þat, / ef þú síá þicciz
[‘Tell this, Grípir, if you seem to see’]

In this case we seem to have three related formula systems:

1. segðu + sjá þykjast (*Bryngerðarljóð* 60, *Grípisspá* 8, 30)
2. svik + sjá þykjast (*Vambarljóð* 7, *Helgakviða Hundingsbana* II 40, 41)
3. hér sit eg hjá þér / og sjá þykjunst (*Vambarljóð* 7, *Bryngerðarljóð* 11)

Vambarljóð 7 instantiates type 2 and 3 together. The *sjá þykjast* element can be regarded as a base formula within the system. It always occurs in a line with the same metrical structure (type C in Sievers’ system).

Mellor makes some more general points about the formulaic use of *segðu* in the *Poetic Edda*. He concludes that certain peculiarities in the use of *segðu* phrases in *Grípisspá* indicate that “the poet of *Grípisspá* [sic] is a lesser poet and, perhaps, a poet not working within the tradition” (Mellor 2008: 122). This seems an overly bold conclusion. While its aesthetic merits can of course be debated, *Grípisspá* has its share of traditional formulas. A poor poem can still be a traditional poem and I am not convinced that *Grípisspá* is a poor poem.

Formula M4

Vambarljóð 34.5–8 (*Þulur* 50):

spurði á móti / margs fróðlega,
‘eða er hér nokkuð / nýtt í fréttum?’

Vambarljóð 64.5–8 (*Þulur* 53):

spurði á móti / margs fróðlega,
‘eða er hér nokkuð / nýtt í fréttum?’
[‘He asked many knowledgeable
questions in turn, “or is there anything
new to report?”’]

Kötludraumur 32.5–6 (*Þulur* 9):

Hvort er nokkuð / nýtt í fréttum
[‘Is there anything new to report?’]

Bryngerðarljóð 37.5–6 (*Þulur* 88):

Vera mun nokkuð / nýtt í fréttum
[‘There will be something new to
report’]

Formula M5

Vambarljóð 14.7–8 (*Þulur* 48):

því að mart við þig / mæla eg vildi
[‘because I would like to say many things to you’]

Bryngerðarljóð 51.3–4 (*Þulur* 90):

kvaðst hún mart við þig / mæla vilja
[‘she said that she would like to say many things to you’]

Merlínússpá I 41.7–8 (*Skj* B_{II}: 18):

kvezk mart við svín / mæla vilja
[‘he says that he would like to say many things to the pig’]

Formula M6

Vambarljóð 33.1–2 (*Þulur* 50):

Heim kom að hausti / horskur stillir
[‘the wise leader came home in the autumn’]

Vambarljóð 45.5–6 (*Þulur* 51):

hélt heim þaðan / horskur stillir
[‘the wise leader went home from there’]

Gullkársljóð 37.1–2 (*Þulur* 80):

Heim kom að hausti / herjar [v.l. horskur]
stillir
[‘the leader of the host [v.l. the wise leader]
came home in the autumn’]

Qrvar-Odds saga IX.46.1–2 (*Skj* B_{II}: 333):

Fóru heim þaðan / horskir drengir
[‘the wise and valiant men went home from there’]

Formula M7

Vambarljóð 16.1–4 (*Þulur* 48):

Gakk í öndvegi / æðra að sitja,
eig svo við mig / át og drykkju
[‘Come to the nobler high-seat and sit down,
then have food and drink with me’]

Þóruljóð 19.5–8 (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2011: 215):

Gakktu í öndugi / og æðra sæti
eigðu ung við mig / át og drykkju [v.l. ‘ung’
omitted]
[‘Come to the high-seat, and the nobler seat.
Have food and drink with me.’]

Qrvar-Odds saga prose (Boer 1888: 171):

Stíg upp, Oddr, í hásæti hjá oss ok eig við oss
át ok drykkju!
[‘Step up, Oddr, into the high-seat with us and
have food and drink with us’]

As I suggested on a previous occasion (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2011: 220), one might

suspect that *Qrvar-Odds saga* paraphrases a poetic formula similar to the one preserved in the two *sagnakvæði*.

Formula M8

Vambarljóð 5.1–2 (*Þulur* 46):

Fagurvaxin gekk / við föður að mæla
[‘the shapely one went to speak with her
father’]

Grípisspá 2.3–4 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 164):

mun sá gramr við mic / ganga at mæla?
[‘Will that king go to speak with me?’]

Skírnismál 2.3 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 69):

ef ec geng at mæla við mög
[‘if I go to speak with my son’]

Formula M8 is a borderline case; the similarity could be coincidental. I include it here because *ganga at mæla* is an unusual turn of phrase in Icelandic; I have not found it elsewhere in poetry or prose. Nevertheless, it is not flagged as a formula by Thorvaldsen (2006: 224) or the *Kommentar* (II: 71) and that may turn out to be correct.

Formula M9

Vambarljóð 62.3–4 (*Þulur* 53):

og þig, mær, / við mundi kaupa
[‘and buy you, maiden, with a bridal
payment’]

Kringilneffjukvæði 32.3–4 (*Þulur* 43):

Eg vil meyjuna / mundi kaupa
[‘I want to buy the maiden with a bridal
payment’]

Grípisspá 30.5–6 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 168):

mun ec meyna / mundi kaupa
[‘I will buy the maiden with a bridal
payment’]

Hálfs saga IX.9.5–6 (*Skj* B_{II}: 288):

mey það hverja / mundi kaupa
[‘He asked that every maiden be bought with a
bridal payment’]

See *Kommentar* (V: 187) for some notes on this expression.

Formula M10

Vambarljóð 6.5–6 (*Þulur* 47):

Mey veit eg öngva / né manns konu
[‘I know of no maiden, nor a man’s wife’]

Lokasenna 37.4–5 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 104):
mey hann né grætir / né mannz kono
[‘he does not bring a maiden to tears, nor a
man’s wife’]

Sigrdrífumál 32.4–5 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 196):
mey þú teygíat / né mannz kono
[‘do not seduce a maiden, nor a man’s wife’]

Hávamál 163.3 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 44):
mey né mannz kono
[‘a maiden nor a man’s wife’]

Formula M10 is listed by Thorvaldsen along
with some further examples of *mær–maðr*
collocations (Thorvaldsen 2006: 271).

Formula M11

Vambarljóð 9.7–8 (*Þulur* 47):
Sit þú, hilmir, heill / með huga glöðum
[‘Sit hail, king, in glad spirits’]

Vambarljóð 39.7–8 (*Þulur* 50):
Vertu hilmir heill / með huga glöðum
[‘Be hail, king, in glad spirits’]

Hymiskviða 11.1–2 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 90):
Ver þú heill, Hymir, / í hugom góðom!
[‘Be hail, Hymir, in good spirits!’]

Runic inscription N B380 from Bergen:⁶
Heill sé þú / ok í hugum góðum
[‘Be hail and in good spirits’]

Hervarar saga III.20.3–4 (*Skj* B_{II}: 269):
nú er hilmis mæ / í hugum góðum
[‘Now the king’s maiden is in good spirits’]

Thorvaldsen (2006: 273) regards the *heill–hugr* collocation as a formula and lists some additional examples. *Vambarljóð* and *Hervararkviða* suggest *hilmir–hugr* as another possible formula.

The N manuscript has this alternative version:

Sittu heill, kóngur, / með hirð glöðu
[‘Sit hail, king, with the glad court’]

Formula M12

Vambarljóð 37.1–2 (*Þulur* 50):
Þið eruð dæliskir / og dulberir
[‘You are foolish and conceited’]

Hávamál 57.6 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 26):
enn til dælscr af dul
[‘but too foolish from conceit’]

Breta sögur alliterative prose (*ONP*: s.v. ‘dólska’):
gnægri hafi þér Bretar dul ok dælsku, hól ok
hræsni, heldr en harðleik ok hyggendi
[‘you Britons have more conceit and
foolishness, self-flattery and vanity rather
than toughness and wisdom’]

The *Hávamál* phrase is not flagged by Thorvaldsen (2006: 191) as a formula, presumably because of the obscurity of the other sources containing it. The alliteration between *dælscr* and *dul* seems to make formula M12 a reasonably clear case. The word *dælscr* is very rare in Icelandic.

Formula M13

Vambarljóð 2.1–2 (*Þulur* 46):
Ól sér döglingur / dóttur eina
[‘the king begat one daughter’]

Gullkársljóð 2.3–4 (*Þulur* 76):
þó átti döglingur / dóttur eina
[‘yet the king had one daughter’]

These two cases may be coincidental. The following two occurrences in the *rímur* are, however, so similar that a connection seems likely:

Geðraunir I.11.1–2 (*Rímnasafn* II: 173):
Dögling ól við dúka Fríð / dóttur eina væna
[‘the king begat one fine daughter with the
Fríðr of cloth’]

Sigurðar rímur þögla I.28.1–2 (Þorvaldur Sigurðsson 1986: 70):
Dögling ól við dúka Gná / dóttur eina ríka
[‘the king begat one great daughter with the
Gná of cloth’]

Formulas in Two Texts

We will now look at formulas which occur in *Vambarljóð* and only one other text; I will label those with the prefix T.

Formula T1

Vambarljóð 2.5–6 (*Þulur* 46):
hafði hverja / hannyrð numið
[‘she had learned every sort of needlework’]

Gullkársljóð 4.7–8 (*Þulur* 77):
og á hvern veg / hannyrð nema
[‘and in every way learn needlework’]

Formula T2

Vambarljóð 11.5–8 (*Pulur* 47):

spurt hef eg alllitt / öðling heilan
og mun eg brátt á því / bætur vinna
[‘I have heard that the king is not at all well
and I will soon improve upon that’]

Gullkársljóð 51.5–8 (*Pulur* 82):

Spurt hef eg Æsu / alllitt heila,
mun eg brátt á því / bætr vinna
[‘I have heard that Æsa is not at all well, I
will soon improve upon that’]

Formula T3

Vambarljóð 34.1–4 (*Pulur* 50):

Illt er undrum / eptir að fréttu
og þó er enn verra / að vita af sýnum.
[‘It is bad to ask about wonders and yet it is
worse still to know beyond doubt’]

Vambarljóð 48.1–4 (*Pulur* 51):

Illt er undrum / eptir að fréttu
þó enn verra / vita að sýnum
[‘It is bad to ask about wonders, yet worse
still to know beyond doubt’]

Gullkársljóð 66.1–4 (*Pulur* 83):

Illt er undrum / eptir að fréttu
þó er enn verra / að vita sýna
[‘It is bad to ask about wonders, yet it is
worse still to know more clearly’]

Formula T4

Vambarljóð 56.3–4 (*Pulur* 52):

vertu fljóð komið / með fagnaði
[‘be welcome, girl, with good cheer’]

Gullkársljóð 71.3–4 (*Pulur* 84):

og þótti fljóð komið / með fagnaði
[‘and felt the girl had come with good cheer’]

Formula T5

Vambarljóð 60.6 (*Pulur* 53):

úr ánaud þegið
[‘delivered from oppression’]

Gullkársljóð 22.4 (*Pulur* 78):

úr nauðum þegin
[‘delivered from distress’]

The resemblance here may seem weak at first glance, but this use of the word *þiggja* [normally ‘accept’] is unusual and distinctive. The words *ánaud* and *nauðir* share a root morpheme and have a similar meaning.

Formula T6

Vambarljóð 67.1–2 (*Pulur* 54):

Það skulu aðrir / ýtar þjóna
[‘other men will serve’]

Gullkársljóð 21.5–6 (*Pulur* 78):

Þér skulu allir / ýtar þjóna
[‘other men will serve you’]

Formula T7

Vambarljóð 68.1–2 (*Pulur* 54):

Dreif drengjalið / á dreka gylltan

Bryngerðarljóð 35.1–2 (*Pulur* 88):

Dreif drengjalið / á dreka gylltan
[‘a host of valiant men rushed onto the golden
dragon-ship’]

Formula T8

Vambarljóð 30.5–8 (*Pulur* 49):

eg skal hvern dag / hjarðar gæta
en þið sæl megið / sitja heima
[‘I will watch the herd every day but you
two can sit happy at home’]

Bryngerðarljóð 14.5–8 (*Pulur* 86):

Þig bað hann heima / hjarðar gæta
en mig ganga / hvert gaman þætti.
[‘He asked you to watch the herd at home
but me to go where I would enjoy myself’]

Examples of formula T8 share only one identical line but there are clear thematic similarities.

Formula T9

Vambarljóð 1.5–6 (*Pulur* 46):

konu átti sér / kynstórrar ættar
[‘he had a wife from a noble family’]

Kringilneffjukvæði 1.5–6 (*Pulur* 39):

konu átti hann sér / af kyni góðu
[‘he had a wife from a good family’]

The textual variants are worth presenting here. The half-stanza has the following form in T₁:

Konu átti sér, / kænna að afli,
kappsamur konungur, / af kyni góðu.
[‘That energetic king, keen in might, had a
wife from a good family’]

The form in V is as follows:

Konu átti hann sér / kynstórrar ættar,
kappsamur konungur / kænna að flestu.

[‘That energetic king, keen in most things,
had a wife from a noble family’]

The T₂ instance is identical to the one in V except that the word *hann* is missing. The stanza is not in N, which has a short prose introduction instead of the first five stanzas of V and T.

Formula T10

Vambarljóð 18.5–6 (*Pulur* 48):
ein á skógi

Kringilnefjukvæði 6.5–6 (*Pulur* 39):
ein á skógi
[‘alone in the woods’]

This seems like it might be a common phrase, but I have not found it anywhere else, in poetry or prose.

Formula T11

Vambarljóð 19.3–4 (*Pulur* 48):
að þú fegri ert / fljóði hverju
[‘that you are fairer than every girl’]

Kringilnefjukvæði 11.7–8 (*Pulur* 40):
að þú fegri ert / en fljóð önnur
[‘that you are fairer than other girls’]

Formula T12

Vambarljóð 40.2 (*Pulur* 50):
ljótvoxin mær
[‘misshapen maiden’]

Kringilnefjukvæði 12.2 (*Pulur* 40):
velvoxin mær
[‘shapely maiden’]

Formula T13

Vambarljóð 59.5–6 (*Pulur* 53):
nú mun eldslitnum / öllum linna
[‘now all the ? will come to an end’]

Kringilnefjukvæði 31.5–6 (*Pulur* 43):
Nú mun álögum / öllum linna
[‘now all the enchantments will come to an end’]

The *Vambarljóð* instance also refers to an enchantment but the word *eldslitnum* is obscure.

Formula T14

Vambarljóð 39.1–2 (*Pulur* 50):
Reiður gekk þaðan / rekka drottinn

Hyndluljóð yngri 23.1–2 (*Pulur* 67):
Reiður gekk þaðan / rekka drottinn
[‘The lord of men walked angry from there’]

Vambarljóð 41.1–2 (*Pulur* 50):
Þá réð að reiðast / rekka drottinn
[‘Then the lord of men grew angry’]

Hyndluljóð is one of the *sagnakvæði*. To distinguish it from the poem of the same name preserved in *Flateyjarbók* I refer to it here as *Hyndluljóð yngri* [‘the younger *Hyndluljóð*’].

A stanza in the 17th century *Hyndlu rímur* paraphrases *Hyndluljóð yngri*:

Hyndlu rímur III.40.1 (Steinunn Finnsdóttir 1950: 26):
Reiður þaðan rekka drottinn réð burt vitja
[‘The lord of men went angry from there’]

In this case, it seems safe to assume that we have a direct textual borrowing (Bergljót Kristjánsdóttir 1996: 214). The *rímur* are clearly based on the *fornyrðislag* poem and the kenning *rekka drottinn* is found nowhere else.

Formula T15

Vambarljóð 23 (*Pulur* 48):
Látum við hvorugt / haldast þetta
sem eg mær við þig / mælti af fólsku
það mun hvorttveggja / haldast verða
þó með meinum / minn sé aldur.
[“Neither of us two should make those things endure which I, maiden, spoke to you out of foolishness.” “Both of those things will have to endure though my life will be a harsh one.”]

Hyndluljóð yngri 46 (*Pulur* 69):
Við skulum þetta / hvorigt haldast láta
þó eg við meyna / mælt hafi af fólsku.
Aldrei skal eg það / aptur taka
þó með meinum / að minn sé aldur.
[“We two should make neither of those things endure though I have spoken out of foolishness to the maiden.” “I will never take it back, though my life will be a harsh one.”]

Formula T16

Vambarljóð 25.5–8 (*Þulur* 49):

Ýtum þótti / hann Ásmundur vera
í fornum sið / frægur snemmindis.
[‘In the time of the old religion, men thought
Ásmundur quickly famous.’]

Þórljóð 3.5–8 (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2011: 213):

þótti þjóðum / Þorkell vera
í fornum sið / frægur snemmendis
[‘In the time of the old religion people
thought Þorkell quickly famous.’]

Here we see the poems making use of synonyms for alliteration purposes. The formula accommodates vowel alliteration in *Vambarljóð* by using *ýtar* [‘men’] and alliteration on ‘þ’ in *Þórljóð* by using *þjóðir* [‘people’].

Formula T17

Vambarljóð 5.3–4 (*Þulur* 46):

og um háls gramí / hendur lagði
[‘and laid her hands around the neck of the
king’]

Sigurðarkviða in skamma 42.3–4 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 214):

oc um háls kono / hendr um lagði
[‘and laid his hands around the neck of the
woman’]

Formula T18

Vambarljóð 7.7–8 (*Þulur* 47):

þó má skjöldungur ei / við sköpum vinna
[‘yet the king cannot win out against fate’]

Helgakviða Hundingsbana II 29.3 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 155):

vinnat scioldungar scöpom
[‘the kings cannot win out against fate’]

Kommentar (IV: 720) cites several parallels to the *Helgakviða* line but none as close as *Vambarljóð*.

Formula T19

Vambarljóð 10.1 (*Þulur* 47):

leyfður konungur
[‘the praised king’]

Sigurðarbálkr 23.1 (*Skj* B_I: 471):

leyfðr konungur
[‘the praised king’]

This resemblance could be coincidental.

Formula T20

Vambarljóð 13.7–8 (*Þulur* 47):

þá gaf hún honum / horn fullt mjaðar
[‘then she gave him a horn full of mead’]

Sigrdrífumál prose: (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 189):

Hon tók þá horn, fult mjaðar, ok gaf hánom
minnisveig.
[‘then she took a horn full of mead and gave
him a memory-drink’]

It is possible that the *Sigrdrífumál* prose paraphrases what is originally a metrical text. The noun phrase *horn fullt mjaðar* [‘a horn full of mead’] forms the metrical A2k pattern.

The drink in *Vambarljóð* causes forgetfulness while the one in *Sigrdrífumál* causes remembrance. Drinks affecting memory also occur in *Guðrúnarkviða* II 21, *Dráp Niflunga*, *Hyndluljóð* 45 and *Bryngerðarljóð* 34 (cf. *Kommentar* V: 540–541).

Formula T21

Vambarljóð 14.2 (*Þulur* 47):

kóngur víðrisinn
[‘the king who gained renown from [?].’]

Grípisspá 13.8 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 166):

gramr vígrisinn
[‘the king who gained renown from battle’]

The word *víðrisinn* (thus in all manuscripts containing the strophe) is of unclear meaning, occurs nowhere else and appears to be an oral corruption of *vígrisinn*. The adjective is not found outside *Grípisspá* (*Kommentar* V: 165).

The words *kóngur* [‘king’] and *gramr* [‘king’] carry the alliteration in each case. If it is correct to regard T21 as some sort of formula, then the synonym usage is the same strategy to accommodate alliteration as found in T16.

Formula T22

Vambarljóð 1.7 (*Þulur* 46):

kappsamr konungur
[‘the energetic king’]

Nórgskonunga tal 4.1–2 (*Skj* B_I: 575):

Tók kappsamr / við konungs nafni
[‘the energetic one took on the name of king’]

Nórekskonunga tal 14.1–2 (*Skj* B_I: 577):

Réð kappsamr / fyr konungdómi

[‘the energetic one held the kingship’]

Formula T23

Vambarljóð 4 (*Pulur* 4):

Gekk á hávan / haug Alþrúðar
morgin hverjan / mætur landreki.
En fyrir hilmi / á margan veg
tignarmenn hans / telja fóru.
[‘Every morning the worthy ruler of the land
went upon the high mound of Alþrúður. But
the nobles went to recount in many ways
before the king.’]

Guðrúnarhvöt 9 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 265):

Guðrún grátandi, / Giúca dóttir,
gecc hon tregliga / á tái sitia,
oc at telia, / táruchlýra,
móðug spíoll / á margan veg:
[‘Weeping did Guðrún, Gjúki’s daughter, go
to sit sadly on the threshold and with tear-
stained cheeks she recounted her sorrows in
many ways.’]

The formula here is *telja á margan veg* [‘recount in many ways’] but it is worth quoting the strophes in full to show the thematic similarity of a grief-stricken person going somewhere to sit.

Formula T24

Vambarljóð 63.3–4 (*Pulur* 53):

mannviti / mestu
[‘most good sense’]

Hávamál 6.9, 10.3, 11.3 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 18):

manvit mikit
[‘much good sense’]

Formula T24 is a borderline case.

Formula T25

Vambarljóð 33.4 (*Pulur* 50),
Merlínússpá I 56.7–8 (*Skj* B_{II}: 21),
Blómsturvalla rímur IV.80.3 (Jón Eggertsson
1976: 62),
(several other *rímur*):
ýta mengi
[‘a multitude of men’]

In *Vambarljóð*, *Merlínússpá* and *Blómsturvalla rímur*, the context is that of drinking.

Formula T26

Vambarljóð 8.7–8 (*Pulur* 47):

með gulli rauðu / og gerseumum
[‘with red gold and precious things’]

Völundarkviða 21.7–8 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 120):

at væri gull rautt / oc gorsimar
[‘that there was red gold and precious
things’]

The collocation *gull og gersemar* [‘gold and precious things’] appears in many poems and also in prose texts (*Kommentar* III: 209) even up to the present day. The adjective *rautt* [‘red’] is frequently applied to gold (*Kommentar* III: 153). *Vambarljóð* and *Völundarkviða* are the only texts I have found where those two expressions occur together. Formula T26 could be seen as a more specific type of the *gull og gersemar* collocation, or as a coincidence.

Formulas within Vambarljóð

The last five formulas I will look at are repetitions within *Vambarljóð*, not found, as far as I can tell, in other poems. I will mark these with the prefix V.

Formula VI

Vambarljóð 39.5–6 (*Pulur* 50):

valt að honum / Vömb óþvegin
[‘The unwashed Belly rolled towards him’]

Vambarljóð 42.1–2 (*Pulur* 51):

Valt óþvegin / Vömb til nauta
[‘The unwashed Belly rolled to the bulls’]

Vambarljóð 50.1–2⁷ (*Pulur* 52):

Valt að vagni / Vömb óþvegin
[‘The unwashed Belly rolled to the carriage’]

Vambarljóð 52.1–2 (*Pulur* 52):

Veltist um urðir / Vömb óþvegin
[‘The unwashed Belly tumbled over the scree’]

The adjective *óþvegin* [‘unwashed’] constitutes a fixed epithet for the heroine.

Formula V2

Vambarljóð 8.3–4 (*Pulur* 47):

var eigi lofðungs mæ / létt um drykkjur
[‘The king’s maiden did not have an easy
time drinking’]

Vambarljóð 45.7–8 (*Pulur* 51):

var eigi lofðungi / létt um drykkju

['The king did not have an easy time drinking']

Formula V3

Vambarljóð 26.5–6 (*Pulur* 49):

hún stýrði löndum / og lýði víða
['She ruled widely over lands and people']

Vambarljóð 54.5–6 (*Pulur* 52):

stýrðu vel löndum / og lýði víða
['Rule well and widely over lands and people']

Formula V4

Vambarljóð 22.1–2 (*Pulur* 48):

Ef svo ólíklega / um verða mætti
['If such an unlikely thing were to happen']

Vambarljóð 47 (*Pulur* 51):

Hvað er svo ólíklegt / orðið um þig
['What unlikely thing has happened to you']

Formula V5

Vambarljóð 63.7–8 (*Pulur* 53):

unz til hallar kom / Hrings að kveldi
['until he came to the hall of Hringur in the evening']

Vambarljóð 68.7–8 (*Pulur* 54):

unz til hallar kom / Ásmunds að kveldi
['until he came to the hall of Ásmundur in the evening']

kennings

We now turn to the kennings, which can be regarded as a special case of poetic formulas. Each kenning is not only a formulaic combination of particular words but an instantiation of a broader system of conventional base words, determinants and referents. For an up-to-date introduction to kennings see Osborne, this volume.

Kenning 1

Vambarljóð 44.2 (*Pulur* 51),

Bryngerðarljóð 20.8 (*Pulur* 86),

Bryngerðarljóð 23.2 (*Pulur* 87):

bauga deilir

Oddrúnargrátr 20.3 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 237):

bauga deili
['divider of rings' = ruler]

Kenning 1 is only found in three poems. The kenning element *deilir* is not used in the *rímur*.

Kenning 2

Vambarljóð 5.6 (*Pulur* 47):

skatna drottinn

Grípisspá 5.2 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 165):

scatna dróttinn

Friðþjófs saga 26.2:

skatna dróttinn

Einarr Skúlason, *Geisli* 64.7:

skatna dróttin
['lord of men' = ruler]

Kenning 2 is another distinctive kenning, found only in a few poems. In this case, one of the poems is in *dróttkvætt*. This kenning is not used in the *rímur*.

Kenning 3

Vambarljóð 54.4 (*Pulur* 52):

gumna drottinn

Atlakviða 23.2 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 244):

gumna dróttinn

Þórbjörn skakkaskáld, *Erlingsdrápa* 2.1 (*Skj* B: 515):

gumna dróttinn

Beowulf 1824 (Klaeber 1941: 68; in other Old English poetry, see Whallon 1969: 137):

gumena dryhten
['lord of men' = ruler]

Kenning 3 is a third distinctive kenning which I have not found in *rímur* or other young poetry.

Kenning 4

rekka drottinn

['lord of men' = ruler]

On the four examples, see formula T14 above:

Kenning 5

seima Bil

['Bil of gold' = woman]

On the eight examples and its much wider use, see formula M2 above.

Kenning 6

Vambarljóð 2.7 (*Pulur* 46):

auðar Bil (v.l. Lín)
['Bil/Lín of wealth' = woman]

Both V_1 and V_2 have *Bil* while both T_1 and T_2 have *Lín*.

Both the *auðar Bil* and *auðar Lín* variants are common post-13th century kennings and *auðar Bil* occurs several times in *Gullkársljóð*.

Kenning 7

Vambarljóð 3.7 (*Pulur* 46):

hlaðsól

[‘sun of lace’ = woman]

Kenning 7 is also found in *Hjálmþérs rímur* I.38.3, XI.9.2 and in a *hálfhneppt* stanza in a late 16th century manuscript (Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir 2007: 76, 154–155).

Kenning 8

Vambarljóð 21.2 (*Pulur* 48):

língrundin

[‘the linen ground’ = woman]

I have not found this exact kenning elsewhere though many similar ones can be found (e.g. *hlaðgrund*, *línjörð*). The N manuscript has *línspöngin* [‘the linen spangle’], which is found already in the 13th century.

Kenning 9

Vambarljóð 26.3 (*Pulur* 49):

veiga þöll

[‘fir-tree of beverages’ = woman]

Kenning 9 occurs in some six medieval *rímur*.

Kenning 10

Vambarljóð 52.6 (*Pulur* 52):

herja stillir

Guðrúnarkviða III 4.2 (Neckel–Kuhn 1983: 232):

heria stilli

[‘the commander of hosts’ = ruler]

Gullkársljóð 37.2 (*Pulur* 80):

herjar stillir

[‘the commander of the host’ = ruler]

Kenning 11

Vambarljóð 69.2 (*Pulur* 54):

bauga þilja

Móðars rímur I.32.4 (Jón Helgason 1950: 6):

bauga þilja

Móðars rímur II.11.2 (Jón Helgason 1950: 10):

bauga þilja

Skógar-Krists rímur I.46 (Sólveig Ebba Ólafsdóttir 2006: 23):

bauga þilja

[‘the plank of rings’ = woman]

The word *þilja* is fairly frequent as a base word in women kennings in the *rímur*. This usage is also found in a stanza quoted in the *Fourth Grammatical Treatise*.

Results and Interpretation

It is readily apparent that the greatest textual similarities in *Vambarljóð* lie with the other *sagnakvæði*. Out of the 47 formulas (including kennings) which have here been identified as occurring in *Vambarljóð* and at least one other text, there are 27 that occur in other *sagnakvæði*. In a number of cases, these are textual similarities which reach across multiple verses. The poem with the largest number of textual affinities to *Vambarljóð* is *Gullkársljóð*, with 10 shared formulas. *Bryngerðarljóð* has 8 shared formulas, *Kringilnefjukkvaði* 7 and *Kötludraumur*, *Þóruðljóð* and *Hyndluljóð yngri* have 2 shared formulas each.⁸

The poetic language of *Vambarljóð* has some connection with that of the *rímur*, mostly in the kennings. Here we have identified 6 shared formulas. This is less than one might expect considering that both the *rímur* and the *sagnakvæði* are late-medieval secular poetry and that the corpus of *rímur* to compare with is vast. *Vambarljóð* has even less in common with pre-14th century poetry in *dróttkvætt* and related meters (‘skaldic’ poetry), the list above shows only a couple of examples.

There is clearly a tendency for poetic formulas to be limited to a particular type of poetry. To some extent this is explained by metrical reasons. A formulaic component like “né manns konu” would not fit into the trochaic rhythm of the *rímur*. It is also worth keeping in mind that the *rímur* were largely a literate enterprise while the *sagnakvæði* existed in oral tradition – this would certainly predict a difference in their use of formulas. The most prominent formulaic part of the *rímur* is the system of kennings and, indeed, that is where we encounter commonalities with the *sagnakvæði*. Even so, there are perfectly trochaic kennings such as *bauga*

deilir (kenning 1) and *skatna drottinn* (kenning 2) which are found in the *sagnakvæði* but do not occur in the *rímur*.

Vambarljóð shares a number of similarities with eddic poetry, some vague, some quite striking. How should these similarities be interpreted? Böðvar Guðmundsson (2006: 483) and Óskar Halldórsson (2004: 233–234) have hinted that they could be the result of Renaissance humanism in post-Reformation Iceland. If this were the case, we would have learned authors deliberately employing archaic expressions known to them from the *Poetic Edda*. But this explanation fails to fit the facts.

It was only in 1643 that the Codex Regius manuscript of the *Poetic Edda* came into Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson's possession and thus became known to the Icelandic cultural elite. *Vambarljóð* is recorded, in more than one version, some 60 years later. Its subject is not legendary history or high mythology but a simple fairytale, something the learned men of 17th century Iceland looked down upon. Icelandic Renaissance humanists certainly did try their hand at writing eddic poetry, but the results – the best known of which is *Hrafnagaldur Óðins* – were very different from the *sagnakvæði* in style, meter, subject, language and use of formulas (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2010; see also Lassen 2011). One would not expect deliberately archaic and obscure poetry to easily enter the popular tradition and, indeed, *Hrafnagaldur* shows no signs of oral transmission. It also has no formulas in common with the *sagnakvæði*, mostly restricting itself to borrowings from *Völuspá* and the so-called *Prose Edda* (or *Snorra Edda*).

Jón Helgason believed that the *sagnakvæði* were a continuation of the eddic tradition⁹ and this remains the best explanation for why they share formulas with the poems of the Codex Regius. The tradition of narrative *fornyrðislag* poetry retained an oral component long after the introduction of writing. In one of the two manuscripts of *Breta sögur*, we find the information that many people know *Merlínússpá* (a long poem in *fornyrðislag*) by heart and this seems to be the reason why the scribe felt it to be unnecessary to include it in the manuscript (*kunna margir menn þat kuæði*

[‘many people know that poem by heart’]) (Jón Sigurðsson 1849: 13; cf. discussion in Jón Helgason 1952: 99).

Vambarljóð shares 17 formulas with the *Poetic Edda* and 10 with other poems in *fornyrðislag* and related meters. The only poem that stands out here is *Grípisspá*, with 5 shared formulas. As I have previously discussed, *Grípisspá* also has formulas in common with other *sagnakvæði* (Haukur Þorgeirsson 2010; 2011). *Grípisspá* is universally considered to be among the youngest poems in the *Poetic Edda*, perhaps the very youngest. This might explain its comparatively greater affinity to late-medieval poetry.

Methodological Questions and Future Work

In the present text, I have sought to show how we might try to establish the relative degree of closeness or relatedness between poems within the same tradition by looking *en masse* at the formulaic textual elements they have in common. I think the preliminary results show some promise and that this is an avenue worth exploring further. But many questions remain open.

In this *Vambarljóð* investigation, I have simply counted every instance of possible formulas that I was able to identify and then added up the raw numbers for every related poem. But one might try to classify formulas depending on how certain or striking or extensive they are. For some purposes, we will certainly want to distinguish between formulas consisting of, say, one verse from those which cover a whole stanza. We may also want to distinguish between expressions that occur only in two poems and those that occur more widely. And what about formulaic expressions that also occur in prose? The *gull og garsemar* [‘gold and precious things’] example (T26) is a case in point. A collocation that can occur in any sort of poetry and also in prose is hardly distinctive enough to tell us much about stylistic affinity.

Another open question is whether it makes sense to treat kennings as a part of the wider array of formulaic expressions or whether they need any special provisions (cf. K8 above). Again, we may wish to distinguish between kennings which seem confined to a

few poems or a certain genre (e.g. K1, *bauga deilir*) and those that have a wide and general distribution (e.g. K5, *seima Bil*).

Finally, I have not dealt with individual poetic words but those are certainly an important part of the poetic diction. To take an example, the word *landreki* ['ruler']¹⁰ occurs three times in *Vambarljóð*. It does not occur in prose but is frequent in pre-1400 poetry, whether in *dróttkvætt* or eddic meters. I have not found it in *rímur* or in post-1400 religious poetry. Another example is the word *bölstaðir* ['staves of woe'] which is found in *Vambarljóð* and *Sigrdrífumál* and not in other sources familiar to me (*Kommentar* V: 608 calls it a *hapax legomenon*). Both of those examples are part of the archaic poetic language found in *Vambarljóð*.

An investigation of this sort will only ever be as good as its philological groundwork. As a basis for future investigation of the *sagnakvæði*, a new critical edition of every poem is a necessity. Such an edition will be a particularly interesting undertaking for *Kötludraumur*, which is preserved in numerous versions independently collected from oral tradition (Gísli Sigurðsson 1995). To a somewhat lesser extent, the same is true for *Snjaskvæði* and *Kringilnefjukvæði*. It remains to be seen whether research on the *fornyrðislag* oral tradition as it existed in the 17th century can throw light on the medieval tradition in the same meter.

Notes

1. The exact number can be argued over. In this paper, I regard the younger *Vambarljóð* as a completely separate poem, which would arguably bring the number up to nine. *Kötludraumur*, also, exists in versions so divergent that a case could be made that they constitute different poems.
2. I am indebted to Frog for this formulation.
3. For the readers' convenience, I list citations to Ólafur Davíðsson's published edition of *Vambarljóð*, despite basing my work on the manuscripts.
4. When using text from *Pulur* I have normalized the spelling.
5. I have normalized the spelling when referring to *rímur* texts or other texts published in diplomatic editions.
6. *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages: Skaldic Database*, available at: <http://skaldic.arts.usyd.edu.au/db.php?table=mss&id=15079>.
7. This strophe is only preserved in T₂.

8. The numbers add up to more than 27 because of formulas occurring in multiple *sagnakvæði*.
9. "Eddadigtingens tradition fortsættes i senmiddelalderen ved nogle anonyme digte i fornyrdslag med tilknytning til eventyr og folkesagn" ["The tradition of eddic poetry continues in the late Middle Ages with some anonymous poems in *fornyrðislag* connected to fairy tales and folk tales"] (Jón Helgason 1952: 167).
10. This word is at the borderline between kenning and *heiti* (cf. Meissner 1921: 353).

Manuscripts

AM 154 8^{vo}
NKS 1141 fol
NKS 1894 4^{to}
JS 398 4^{to}
JS 405 4^{to}
JS 406 4^{to}
JS 579 4^{to}
JS 581 4^{to}
Thott 489 8^{vo}
Lbs 985 4^{to}
Lbs 2324 4^{to}
Lbs 202 8^{vo}
ÍB 895 8^{vo}

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A Method for Analyzing World-Models in Scandinavian Mythology

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This paper discusses how to construct a method for analyzing and interpreting world-models¹ in Scandinavian mythology² by adapting and developing Vladimir Propp's schema for the dramatis personae of folktales found in *The Morphology of the Folktale* (1968 [1928]) as a foundational method for

analyzing the world-models employed in a certain type of narratives about Scandinavian gods, which will be called *gods' journeys*. Gods' journeys comprise approximately 50% of the number of identifiable narratives about Scandinavian gods in the work called *Edda* by Snorri Sturluson (*Snorra Edda* hereafter), in

eddic poetry and in skaldic poetry. The theme common to all gods' journeys is a situation of confrontation between a Nordic god (referred to hereafter by the vernacular term *æsir*) and an inhabitant of 'the otherworld'. In the other types of narratives, this situation of a confrontation between inhabitants of Ásgarðr ['God-Realm'] and inhabitants of different types of otherworld is also very often present, making this more general theme the most common one in the mythology. The analysis of the narrative structures of the gods' journeys constitutes another approach to the construction of world-models in Scandinavian mythology, which is different from the prevalent discussion in scholarship about the subject (see below). By employing the analysis of narrative structures it may be possible to more skillfully negotiate the issues of genre and form in this varied type of medieval literature about the pre-Christian past. This paper will begin by providing an overview of the methodological problem of analyzing world-models in Scandinavian mythology, then proceed to applying Propp's functions to the narratives and conclude with some remarks on combining Propp's schema with spatial analysis. The object is not to construct detailed world-models, but rather to keep the discussion on an abstract level in order to be generally accurate in assessing the methodological value of world-models.³

The Methodological Problem

The analysis of world-models in Scandinavian mythology was first promoted by Aaron Ya. Gurevich (1969) and Eleazar M. Meletinsky (1973). In *Space and Time in the Weltmodell of the Old Scandinavian Peoples*, Gurevich approached this subject from the perspective of the pre-Christian Scandinavians' inability to separate themselves from their environment (Gurevich 1969: 42), arguing that there was a direct correlation between the reality of pre-modern Scandinavians and the literary imagery of the mythological poetry and prose, as well as linguistic concepts (Gurevich 1969: 42–43). In his article "Scandinavian Mythology as a System", Meletinsky proposed an analytical approach to Scandinavian mythology that systematically seeks out elementary semantic oppositions

and narrative motifs (Meletinsky 1973: 43). Meletinsky was heavily influenced by Claude Lévi-Strauss and Lévi-Strauss's notion of binary oppositional categories (Meletinsky 1973: 45). This leads Meletinsky to suggest a model of the pre-Christian Scandinavian cosmos divided according to both a horizontal and a vertical axes imbued with mythological meaning in oppositional categories (Meletinsky 1973: 46–57). In the 1980s, Kirsten Hastrup adopted and expanded on Meletinsky's world-model in multiple studies (Hastrup 1981; 1985; 1990). Most importantly, Hastrup proposed the widely accepted model of concentric circles that sketches out the horizontal opposition between *æsir* and *jǫtnar* ['Giants'] in the monolithic cosmological terms Ásgarðr ['God-Realm'] and Útgarðr ['Out-Realm'], presumably corresponding directly to the linguistic concepts of the spatial arrangement of the farm in Icelandic: *innangarðs* ['inside the fence'] and *útangarðs* ['outside the fence'] (Hastrup 1990: 28–32).

Meletinsky and Hastrup were criticized by Jens Peter Schjødt (1990) for their use of source material, followed by Margaret Clunies Ross (1994), who suggested that there may not have been such a sharp division between the *æsir* and *jǫtnar* after all. Clunies Ross also pointed out that the term *Útgarðr* is not a common locution in the mythological vocabulary, the plural term *Jǫtunheimar* ['Giant-Realms'] is the one most widely used (Clunies Ross 1994: 51–52). Of special notice is the critique raised by Stefan Brink (2004: 295–297), in which he explicitly opposes the notion of a coherent spatial system in Scandinavian mythology, denounces the semantic oppositions of Lévi-Strauss's structuralism (and structuralism in general), and suggests that the cosmology of *Snorra Edda* in particular was "färgats av den kristna, retoriska polariteten mellan himmel och helvete" ['coloured by the Christian rhetorical polarity between Heaven and Hell'] (Brink 2004: 298). A similar critique of structuralism and the use of *Snorra Edda* to describe the pre-Christian Scandinavian world-model was also raised by Gro Steinsland (2005: 141–142).

To date, only one doctoral dissertation has been produced devoted to this subject. This is Nanna Løkka's *Sted og landskap i norrøn mytologi* (2010). Methodologically, Løkka's dissertation is interesting because she concedes to Brink's critique of Meletinskij's and Hastrup's analyses, but at the same time confesses to perform a structuralist analyses herself (Løkka 2010: 35). She rejects the Lévi-Straussian notion of semantic oppositions and suggests that the causal premises on which cosmology works are inherently monistic rather than dualistic. Dualism is assigned to a Christian conception of the world, while it is believed that the eddic poems, taken to be sources to the pre-Christian era, arguably display notions of monism (Løkka 2010: 259–263). *Snorra Edda* is left out of the investigation owing to its literary complexity and indisputable composition in Christian times (Løkka 2010: 22). In Løkka's view it seems that the cosmology of *Snorra Edda* is indeed an expression of the "Christian rhetorical polarity between Heaven and Hell" that Brink describes in the above quote. Løkka (2010: 37–44) makes use of two different methods for analysis: sequential analyses bordering on narratological text-analysis; and the analysis of motifs as symbols in a structured socio-religious context.

Evidently there is a later scholarly tendency to move away from Lévi-Straussian notions of semantic oppositions, and even a lowered willingness to utilize the contents of *Snorra Edda* as a source for pre-Christian Scandinavian mythology. There are, of course, good reasons to be cautious in the use of *Snorra Edda* as a source and this material must be addressed with care,⁴ but to discard this material or ignore it entirely is to rob this field of an invaluable source for new realizations. Recent scholarship seems rather overhasty in judging both the content of *Snorra Edda*, as well as the notion of semantic oppositions in the pre-Christian Scandinavian world-model. In fact, Meletinsky already has a ready answer to critics such as Brink on the first page of his article:

The systematic order of Scandinavian mythology is not absolute and its degree is

not constant in its various areas; there are also contradictions difficult to overcome. (Meletinsky 1973: 43.)

Meletinsky posits that one should not look for a complete and universally coherent system, but asserts that structures of commonalities are present. This simply calls for a further development of methodological tools for analyzing the world-model of Scandinavian mythology. Løkka has provided us with a groundbreaking attempt to develop these and there is still much that can be done. To the study of the Scandinavian mythological world-model, Løkka's sequential analyses applied to the eddic poems of gods' journeys are the most intriguing ones. If the proper tools for carrying out such sequential analyses can be developed, it is possible to transgress the different genres that communicate Scandinavian mythology and perform world-model analyses accounting for the greater part of the material.

The Data

The gods' journeys are broadly represented in Scandinavian mythology. Of the thirteen individually distinguishable mythological fictions⁵ about the *æsir* in *Snorra Edda*, approximately eight are narratives about a god's journey to the otherworld. (See the source index in (1) below). *Snorra Edda* also preserves skaldic versions of Þjazi's abduction of Íðunn and Þórr's encounter with Geirrøðr in the poems *Haustlång* and *Þórsdrápa*. These are also journey narratives. In eddic poetry, the ratio is the opposite: five journey narratives out of approximately twelve individual eddic poems on gods extant in the main manuscripts Codex Regius (GkS 2365 4^{to}) and AM 748 4^{to}. Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum* presents four narratives: two about the hero Thorkillus; one about Othinus's rape of Rind; and one about Høtherus's acquisition of a sword. The narratives about Thorkillus can be identified as derivatives of some of the Þórr-myths preserved in *Snorra Edda*. This is also the case for one short saga called *Þorsteins saga bæjarmagns*. (See McKinnell 1994: 57–86.) Because of their relationship with the Þórr-myths, these may also be defined as gods'

journeys. The journey narratives preserved in Scandinavian mythology are therefore:

(1) Source index of gods' journey narratives.

Prose narratives from Snorra Edda

Pórr's Journey to Útgarðaloki	(ÞJÚ)
Pórr and Miðgarðsormr	(ÞM)
The Death of Baldr	(DB)
Þjazi and Íðunn	(ÞÍ)
The Mead of Poetry	(MP)
Pórr and Hrungnir	(ÞH)
Pórr's Journey to Geirrøðr	(ÞJG)
Æsir's Journey to Hreiðmar*	(ÆJH)

Eddic poems

<i>Skírnismál</i>	(<i>Skm</i>)
<i>Hymiskviða</i>	(<i>Hym</i>)
<i>Þrymskviða</i>	(<i>Þrk</i>)
<i>Baldrs draumar</i>	(<i>Bdr</i>)
<i>Reginsmál</i>	(<i>Rm</i>)

Skaldic poems

Þjazi and Íðunn in <i>Haustlǫng</i>	(<i>HI</i>)
Pórr and Geirrøðr in <i>Pórsdrápa</i>	(<i>Pd</i>)

Prose narratives from Gesta Danorum

Thorkillus's Journey to Geruthus	(TJG)
Thorkillus's Journey to Ugarthilocus	(TJU)
Høtherus's Acquisition of the Sword	(HS)
Othinus's Rape of Rind	(OR)

Prose sagas

<i>Þorsteins saga bæjarmagns</i>	(<i>Þsb</i>) ⁶
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* *ÆJH* is the prelude to the tale of *Sigurðr Fáfnisbani*.

The plot of each of these narratives consists of a situation, where one or more representatives of the *æsir* group undertake a journey to Útgarðr, Hel, Jötunheimar or the location of an antagonist that is named after its owner, such as Geirrøðargarðar, Þrymheimr, etc. These locations may commonly be denoted as *the otherworld*. There are many different reasons for the otherworld journeys, but in each instance the culmination of the journey is the confrontation with a primary inhabitant of the otherworld. This situation of confrontation is also present in several other narratives, which for different reasons cannot be satisfyingly analyzed as gods' journeys using the functions of the *dramatis personae*. These narratives include the tale of the Masterbuilder in *Snorra Edda* (describing the origins of the walls of Ásgarðr) and the

narrative frame of the monologic and dialogic eddic poems *Völuspá*, *Vafþrúðnismál*, *Grímnismál*, *Alvíssmál* and *Hyndluljóð*. The primary problem with fitting these narratives to the functions of the *dramatis personae* is that they simply lack a significant number of the relevant functions. It does, however, seem that the subject of confrontation between the *æsir* and the primary inhabitants of the otherworld is widely represented in Scandinavian mythology, and that the narrative plots are either the situation of confrontation or the narrative sequence leading up to and including the confrontation. The form, function and result of these confrontations vary greatly, but the structures of the journey narratives have many features and details in common.

Analytical Approach

Vladimir Propp's (1968: 25–65) pattern for approaching the folktale is adapted here as an analytical tool in order to consider the distinguishable functions of the narrative structures. These unique functions of the narrative structures reveal the dynamics between the protagonists and antagonists of the narratives, and are thus expressions of movements in a conceivable world-model that must be present for the mythology to work. In 1928, the Russian formalist Vladimir Propp published his morphological analysis of Russian fairy tales in *Morphology of the Folktale* (*Morfológija skázki*). The aim was the structural description of the Russian fairy tale (Propp 1968: xx–xxi). Propp observed that the fairy tales have a limited set of functions related to the characters, or *dramatis personae*, which are constant elements of the tales, and appear throughout the material independently of how and by whom they are fulfilled. These functions are realized within a formalized structure in narratives. This can be illustrated with the following four variants of a journey-plot (Propp 1968: 19–22) in example (2):

- (2) 1. A tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom.
2. An old man gives Súčenko a horse. The horse carries him away to another kingdom.

3. A sorcerer gives Iván a little boat. The boat takes Iván to another kingdom.
4. A princess gives Iván a ring. Young men appearing from out of the ring carry Iván away into another kingdom.

The corresponding plot in journey narratives in Scandinavian mythology can be identified in a similar manner as outlined in (3). It is observed that they include a similar motion: a member of the collective must for some reason undertake a journey to the otherworld by some special means:

- (3) 1. One or more gods desire something that is located in the otherworld. Someone from the *æsir* collective is sent there to retrieve it.
2. A crisis situation occurs in Ásgarðr as a result of social exchange with the otherworld. Someone from the *æsir* collective is sent there to resolve the situation.

Propp observed that all the fairy tales that he analyzed are of one type in regards to their structure (Propp 1968: 23). This structure outlines a set of actions or functions that are identified as part of a chain of events relating to the plot of journeying to another world. This makes his method highly useful for this present study of world-models in Scandinavian mythology.

- (4) Complete list of functions in folktales according to Propp (1968: 25–65).
- α: Initial situation (introduction of the hero, enumeration of a family)
- β: Absentation (one of the protagonist group leaves home)
- γ: Interdiction (the hero is presented with an interdiction in some capacity)
- δ: Violation (the hero violates the interdiction)
- ε: Reconnaissance (the villain attempts to obtain information in order to hurt the protagonist and/or his group, or a member of this group)
- ζ: Delivery (the villain obtains information)
- η: Trickery (the villain attempts to deceive or take possession of a victim or his belongings)
- θ: Complicity (the victim of the villain's deception submits)

- A: Villainy (the villain causes harm to a member of the protagonist group)
- a: Lack (a member of the protagonist group lacks something. This can supplant A)
- B: The connective incident (the lack or misfortune is made known)
- C: Beginning counteraction (the seeker-hero agrees to counteract)
- ↑: Departure (the hero leaves home)
- D: Donor situation (a potential donor tests, interrogates, attacks or in another way interacts with the hero)
- E: Reaction (the hero reacts to the confrontation with the donor)
- F: Provision/receipt of a magical agent (the hero acquires provision of some kind from the donor)
- G: Spatial transference/guidance (the hero enters another realm)
- H: Struggle (the hero engages in a confrontation with the villain)
- J: Branding (the hero is branded in his confrontation with the villain)
- I: Victory (the hero defeats the villain)
- K: Liquidation of lack or misfortune (the balance is restored and the lack or misfortune represented by 'A' or 'a' is liquidated)
- ↓: Return (the hero returns home)
- Pr: Pursuit (the hero is pursued by the villain)
- Rs: Rescue (the hero is rescued from the villain)
- o: Unrecognized arrival (the hero arrives at home without being recognized, or he arrives in another country)
- L: Unfounded claims (in the absence of the hero, another man claims to be the hero)
- M: Difficult task (the hero is faced with a difficult task to prove his authenticity)
- N: Solution (the task is resolved)
- Q: Recognition (the hero is recognized)
- Ex: Xposure (the false hero [or the villain in disguise] is exposed)
- T: Transfiguration (the hero is given a new appearance)
- U: Punishment (the villain is punished)
- W: Wedding (the hero is married or receives compensation)

Margaret Clunies Ross & B.K. Martin (1986) have suggested that it is possible to apply Propp's pattern to the mythological fictions of *Snorra Edda*, and demonstrated this with the example of Þórr's Journey to Geirrðr (ÞJG).

The attempt at doing so is carried out with certain difficulty, assigning several of Propp's functions to be presupposed in the course of the ÞJG narrative and after giving another example, this time applied to Þjazi's Abduction of Íðunn (ÞÍ), they conclude that "Snorri appears to conform to the Proppian pattern, but uses it skillfully and freely" (Clunies Ross & Martin 1986: 65). According to Clunies Ross & Martin, this suggests a conscious attempt on behalf of the author of *Snorra Edda* to employ folktale patterns in his treatment of the myths, and further that it indicates this was purely a 13th century phenomenon (Clunies Ross & Martin 1986: 72). This view is problematic. There is no reason to assume that this pattern was only adapted to myths in the 13th century, and that the pattern was only meaningful in a medieval context. There is also no reason to assume that such structural patterning is specific to the genre of folktales as opposed to other types and genres of traditional narrative (cf. Lord 1960; Briggs & Bauman 1992: 133–134). As will be shown below, the same structural pattern is also perceivable in eddic poems (traditional Old Norse narrative poetry that offers the closest equivalent to epic). This pattern corresponds to a plot of journeying to the otherworld. It could be argued that this plot of journeying simply requires the basic narrative units as identified by Propp, and so it does not necessarily suggest conscious redaction on behalf of a medieval author.⁷ However, the purpose here is not to address generic strategies of specific examples but rather to illustrate the application of Proppian pattern analysis of narratives of Scandinavian mythology, and what such analysis can reveal.

The patterns of the two examples given by Clunies Ross & Martin (1986: 64–65) are provided in example (5):

- (5) a. (ÞJG): (α) β (γ) (δ) ε ζ η θ A (B) (C) ↑
 (D) (E) F G Hx3 Ix3 K (L)
 b. (ÞÍ): α β η θ A B C ↑ G K ↓ Pr Rs : a C
 ↑ G M N K/W

These examples can serve as models for analyzing the other journey narratives in Scandinavian mythology, and the structures can thus serve as model examples of the basic

elements of journey narratives. With very few exceptions, the available material displays a structure that is built around a preparatory part; a complication; a donor situation and a confrontation (see below). It is important to note, however, that it is not the entire structure of Propp's folktale pattern which is relevant to this material. Practically none of Propp's functions from 'o' to 'W' are present in this material. This is due to the genre and theme of the mythic fictions of *Snorra Edda* as well as the eddic and skaldic poems. The folktales are preoccupied with human life, whereas the central narratives of Scandinavian mythology do not typically engage such themes: they are most often preoccupied with events of numinous or cosmic significance.⁸ It is, however, interesting to note that some of these elements are incorporated in TJG/TJU and *Þsb*, where the characters are human. This is an obvious condition derived from the fact that a) Propp's pattern was developed for a certain type of narrative in a certain culture, and b) Scandinavian mythology is transmitted in several types of genre. However, if the Proppian pattern is employed in instances where it is meaningful as a tool to examine the narrative structure, the situation is different.

Clunies Ross & Martin have established that the Proppian pattern can meaningfully be applied to the mythological fictions of *Snorra Edda*. In other areas of Old Norse studies, structural analyses are being used for discussing embedded ritual structures in narratives. The scholar of religion Jens Peter Schjødt argues that a myth in Scandinavian mythology is a sequence of Proppian functions which are combined in a certain order, and that the narratives deal with events that play out in the field between this world and the other world. This is important to the way in which society's worldview is organized. (Schjødt 2008: 65–66.) Although Schjødt does not directly employ Propp's pattern in his structural analyses, his current work attests to the applicability of sequential analysis to Scandinavian mythology for discussions about worldview.⁹ The observation of the realization of spatial codes and conceptions in narrative patterns is

present in Schjødt's work as well as the work of other scholars of religion, anthropologists and even philosophers.

The anthropologist Roy Wagner (2001) has observed how spatial structures of the cosmos and world among tribes in Papua New Guinea are directly involved in the narrative web of their cosmological myths, and philosophers of place and space such as J.E. Malpas (1999: 44–45) argue that space is only fully conceivable if understood as space for movement and activity. To Malpas (1999: 50) space is egocentric and experiential, and should be understood on the premises of a creature's involvement with its world. Notions of the connectedness of space and time in narratology is also at the basis of Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981: 84–258) theory of *chronotopes*. The sequential analysis of the journey narratives reveals expressions of movements in a conceived world-model. That world-model must be present for the mythology to function insofar as such an analysis reveals narrative characters' involvement with their world. Consequently, analysis of journey narratives produces information about conceptions of the world-model within which the narrative is framed. On this basis, a world-model can be abstracted. The analysis of world-models in Scandinavian mythology is thus essentially an attempt to understand the space experienced in the narratives.

The author of *Snorra Edda*, who also makes an analysis of the cosmic space of Scandinavian mythology on his own terms, puts his understanding of the world-model into the mouths of Hár, Jafnhár and Þriði within the frame of the *Gylfaginning* section of this work. The composers of eddic poems place corresponding understandings in the mouths of Óðinn, the *völva*, Alvíss, Vafþrúðnir and other characters in monologic and dialogic presentations. This is described space, which stands in contrast to experienced space in so far as experienced space is accessible through the analysis of narrative sequences. Described space is consciously locked in its contemporary frame of reference as a medieval attempt to describe the world-model that is otherwise reflected in narratives, experience and the cultural discourses

surrounding these. In the following, Propp's principles for the narrative analysis of folktales is applied to the myths of gods' journeys in Scandinavian mythology for the purpose of understanding the experienced space of these tales, and negotiate this problem. The analysis follows a grouping of functions in four phases which are logical narrative consequences of one another. These phases are: *the preparatory phase*, which is identified as the course of dramatis personae actions leading to Propp's function 'A' villainy or 'a' lack; *the complication*, which is the course of actions initiated by the protagonist collective to counteract the effect of 'A'/'a'; *the donor situation*, which corresponds to a point of no return, where the journeying god has entered another realm; and *the confrontation*, which is the final situation, where the god engages the primary inhabitant of the otherworld.

The Preparatory Phase

The preparatory phase sets the stage for a narrative, presenting the essential conditions for the complication and movement of plot. Propp represents the chain of functions with Greek letters (see (4) above). In the narratives of *Snorra Edda*,¹⁰ the preparatory phase is initiated by the absention (β) of one or more members of the *æsir* collective and it is characterized as a situation that is of threat to the stability of the *æsir*:

(6) The *preparatory phase* of gods' journeys in *Snorra Edda*.

- a. DB: Frigg is alone in the hall and susceptible to Loki's deceit. The preparatory phase leads to the murder of Baldr (murder/loss): α β ε ζ η θ = A/a
- b. ÞÍ: Óðinn, Hænir and Loki are out in the wilderness (*eyðimörk*). The preparatory phase leads to Þjazi's abduction of Íðunn (abduction/loss): α β η θ = A/a
- c. MP: Kvasir leaves the *æsir* and travels the world exposing himself to the crimes of Fjalar and Galar. The preparatory phase leads to Bolverkr's quest for the mead (a need is implied: murder/need): α β η θ = A(a)
- d. ÞH: Óðinn rides to Jötunheimar and is confronted with Hrungrnir. The preparatory phase leads to Hrungrnir's threat to Ásgarðr (giant threatens): α β ε ζ η = A

- e. ÞJG: Loki flies to Geirrðargarðar and is captured. The preparatory phase leads to a threat to Loki and thus the collective of the *æsir* (giant threatens): $\alpha \beta \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta = A$
- f. ÆJH: Óðinn, Hœnir and Loki kill Óttar and are confronted (tricked?) by Hreiðmar who is a skilled magician (*ffolkunnigr*). The preparatory phase leads to a threat against the *æsir* collective (threat/need): $\alpha \beta \eta \theta = A/a$

In the gods' journeys of skaldic and eddic poetry, there is a little more variation, but the same structure is identifiable:

(7) The *preparatory phase* of gods' journeys in eddic and skaldic poetry.

- a. *Skm*: Freyr sits on Hlíðskjálfr (violating an implicit interdiction) and sees Gerðr. The preparatory phase leads to Freyr's need to have Gerðr (need): $\alpha \gamma \delta = a$
- b. *Hym*: Þórr demands of Ægir that he holds a feast for the *æsir*, but the *jötunn* attempts to cheat him, saying that he has no kettle (thereby leading Þórr to Hymir in an attempt to have him killed). The preparatory phase leads to the need for the kettle (need): $\alpha \beta (\varepsilon) \eta = A$
- c. *Þd*: Loki tricks Þórr to go search for Geirrðar and Þórr accepts this. The preparatory phase leads to a threat against Þórr and a need to kill Geirrðar (threat/need): $\eta \theta = A/a$
- d. *Hl*: Þjazi seeks out the *æsir*, finds them, abducts Loki and coerces him to bring him Íðunn. The preparatory phase leads to Íðunn's abduction (abduction/loss): $\alpha \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta = A/a$

In the cases of *Þrk* and *Bdr* the preparatory phase is not as such present in the narrative. Both begin *in medias res* and in the case of *Þrk* it is clear that the preparatory phase is presupposed (Þrymr, the villain, has already stolen Þórr's hammer when Þórr wakes up, and it is at this point the poem begins). In *Bdr*, it is not possible to analyze the preparatory phase in the same way, as the events leading to 'a' (lack) are not caused by an individual, but by ominous dreams.

The preparatory phase is a situation of violation: where one or more social rules are violated by a transgressor – i.e. someone who crosses the line from a socially acceptable state to a state of crisis. The transgressor can be from outside of Ásgarðr, but in a few

instances it is one of the *æsir*. There are ten narratives with a preparatory phase. In seven of these, the violation occurs outside of Ásgarðr (6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f, 7b, 7d), indicating a conception of the realm outside as a place where the *æsir* are vulnerable. In each case, it is an outsider that violates the social rules (also in the cases where a god has some responsibility for the situation, such as in the case of Óðinn challenging Hrungrnir (6d) or Loki luring Íðunn outside to Þjazi (6e)). In the three narratives where the violation occurs inside Ásgarðr (6a, 7a, 7c), there are two instances where Loki is the villain (6a, 7c), and one instance where Freyr violates what must be construed as an interdiction not to sit on Hlíðskjálfr, causing him to be lovesick (7a). When the violation occurs inside Ásgarðr, the subject of it relates to internal affairs, such as Loki's disloyalty or Freyr's emotions.¹¹ When the violation occurs outside, it is because of hostile creatures attempting to deceive, kill or take possession of the *æsir*.

The Complication

The preparatory part leads to *the complication*, which works in the journey narratives much as in Propp's folktales. This phase is initiated by the act of villainy which is the result of the preparatory phase. It consists of the functions $A/a \ B \ C \ \uparrow$ (Propp 1968: 31–39). It is by means of 'A'/'a' that the movement of the journeying god (seeker) is launched (Propp 1968: 30) and the following functions 'B' 'C' and '↑' are reactions to 'A', where the collective seeks to remedy that act that constitutes 'A' (murder, loss, abduction, need, threat to the collective, threat to a representative of the collective). The complication results in the transfer of the seeker to the otherworld. There is an aspect of these mythological fictions that is not recorded by Propp in relation to his folktales; before departure, the journeying god is quite often equipped with some special means for the journey (designated by me as 'P'):

(8) The god is equipped for the journey ('P').¹²

- a. DB: Hermóðr is given Sleipnir.
- b. Þf: Loki dresses as a falcon.
- c. MP: Óðinn is disguised as Bólverkr.

- d. *ÞH*: The duel is prepared and the giant Mokkurkálfi is created (this is an inversion).
- e. *Skm*: Skírnir receives the sword and horse.
- f. *Þrk*: Loki is dressed in Freyja's feathers.
- g. *Bdr*: Óðinn prepares Sleipnir.
- h. *ÞM*: Þórr disguises himself as a youth.

The Donor Situation

On his way to the primary destination in the otherworld, the journeying god encounters a donor figure that in some way facilitates his further movement. An inhabitant of the otherworld tests, interrogates, attacks or in another ways interacts with the journeying god, if for not other reason than simply to signify the entry into this new world. This action is the sequence 'D' 'E' 'F'. In terms of the narratives, it can be classified as a *donor situation*, where the encounter between the seeker and the donor has the sole function of leading the narrative on to the *confrontation* with the primary inhabitant of the otherworld:

(9) *Donor situations* in gods' journey narratives.

- a. *ÞJÚ*: There are two types of donors: the peasant's family and Skrímir. The peasant's family provides Þórr with Þjálfi, who is of use in Útgarðr, and the test is Þórr having to master his temper when he learns that Þjálfi has broken the goat's leg. When they have crossed the sea, Þórr is faced with another – quite comical – test in the donor Skrímir. Skrímir also tests Þórr's temper, but here Þórr responds with violence,¹³ and Skrímir's role is to direct the *æsir* to Útgarðr. This function of directing the journeying god is found quite often.
- b. *ÞM*: Hymir's testing of Þórr has the function of bringing Þórr to the confrontation with Miðgarðsormr, but at the same time also to provide him with utilities for the confrontation (the ox-head).
- c. *DB*: Móðguðr directs Hermóðr on his way, when he has told her his name and family.
- d. *MP*: Bqlverkr's encounter with Baugi and his slaves fills the function of providing him with tools and access to Gunnlqð.
- e. *ÞH*: Þjálfi's persuading of Hrungrir to stand on his shield can fill the donor function, though not in a way that corresponds to Propp's definition. It nevertheless has the same function as D E F because the narrative element leads to the

confrontation between Þórr and Hrungrir.¹⁴

- f. *ÞJG*: Gríðr acts as a benevolent donor to Þórr; Geirrøðr's daughters act as malevolent 'donors' attempting to kill Þórr (this corresponds to the functions D^{8/9} and E^{8/9} in Propp's schema [1968: 42–43]). Geirrøðr's daughters involuntarily lead Þórr to Geirrøðr.
- g. *ÆJH*: Loki acquires the gold from Andvari in order to pay wergild to Hreiðmar.
- h. *Skm*: Skírnir's encounter with the shepherd fills the donor's interrogative function (Propp 1968: 40).
- i. *Hym*: Týr's mother hides Þórr and Týr.
- j. *Þrk*: Loki's question to Þrymr. Here Þrymr plays the part of the donor although he is also the primary inhabitant of the otherworld. This is similar to the case of Útgarðaloki who disguises himself as Skrímir.
- k. *Bdr*: Óðinn is met by the Hel-hound.
- l. *Þd*: Þórr is saved from Gjálp and Vímur by Þjálfi, and they vanquish the *jotnar* before confronting Geirrøðr.

The donor situation and the confrontation occur in all these narratives except in both versions of Þjazi's Abduction of Íðunn (*ÞÍ* and *HI*), where the narratives advance directly from the complication to the confrontation. It is important to note that the donor can have many different roles and that the situation can have many different outcomes (Propp 1968: 43). It may also be noted that this testing function occurs repeatedly in several narratives and that *spatial transference/guidance* (function G) may occur multiple times in this sequence.¹⁵

In the complication, advice is often sought among the *æsir*, indicating strong synergy in the familiar group. The journeying god is chosen among its members (never from an outsider group) and he is equipped with some special means for the journey (in eight cases out of twelve: see index (8) above). The notion that the journeying god must be equipped with a means of transportation or a guise of some kind shows that the journey is not taken lightly. If there was no need for equipment, the journey would be very local. (See also McKinnell 1994: 63–65). The equipping of the journeying god indicates a long distance, a complicated journey and/or

that the journey requires special attention. This presumably points to the notion that the destination is in fact distant from home.

The meeting with the donor signifies the journeying god's entry into the otherworld and quite often includes a warning against danger, if not an expression of danger. Skrímir warns the *æsir* against Útgardaloki and his men (9a); Hymir says Þórr is too small to row out to sea (9b); Baugi tries to kill Bólverkr (9d); Geirrøðr's daughters try to kill Þórr (9f); the shepherd warns Skírnir (9h); Týr's mother hides Þórr and Týr (9i); and the Hel-hound that Óðinn meets has an ominous appearance (9k). Þórr's behavior in ÞJÚ (9a) is also an indicator of the inherently dangerous situation in travelling out of the familiar realm; Þórr is constantly aggressive and violent in Útgardr and in the company of Skrímir. This may be understood as a defensive strategy.

The Confrontation

The element of confrontation in each of these tales corresponds to the series of functions in Propp's (1968: 51–57) schema designated as 'H' 'J' 'I' 'Pr' and 'Rs'. This is where the journeying god confronts the primary inhabitant of the otherworld – the being that the journeying god was looking for in the first place:

(10) *Confrontations* in gods' journey narratives.

- a. ÞJÚ: Útgardaloki confronts Þórr and his party with a series of tests.
- b. ÞM: Þórr and Miðgardsormr join in a trial of strength and combat.
- c. DB: Hermóðr confronts Hel and is given an ultimatum.
- d. ÞÍ: Þjazi is killed in his pursuit of Loki.
- e. MP: Bólverkr trades sex for mead with Gunnlōð and Suttung is defeated in his pursuit of Óðinn.
- f. ÞH: Þórr kills Hrungnir.
- g. ÞJG: Þórr kills Geirrøðr.
- h. ÆJH: Óðinn, Hœnir and Loki pay wergild to Hreiðmar.
- i. *Skm*: Skírnir confronts Gerðr.
- j. *Hym*: Þórr has a series of trials with Hymir, gets the kettle, is pursued by Hymir and kills him.¹⁶
- k. *Þrk*: Loki and Þórr are confronted with Þrymr in a series of comical 'trials' that

Loki resolves (Þrymr's questions about 'Freyja') and eventually Þórr kills Þrymr.

l. *Bdr*: Óðinn confronts the dead 'völva'.

m. *Þd*: Þórr kills Geirrøðr.

n. *Hl*: Þjazi is killed by the *æsir*.

The confrontation is often violent and life-threatening, but this is dependent on the theme of the narrative. There is no threat to the male protagonist's life when he encounters a female inhabitant of the otherworld (the only case is in the donor situation in ÞJG (9f)). Both in *Skm* (10i) and in MP (10e) the male associates of Gunnlōð and Gerðr are threats to the protagonist's life, though the female themselves – including Hel in DB (10c) and the *völva* in *Bdr* (10l) – seem rather hostile. As in the case of the donor situation, the functions of the confrontation can be repeated, but what separates the two situations is that the confrontation comes after the donor situation, when the journeying god has obtained helping items and/or has been guided to the location of the confrontation.

The narratives end with the *return* function ('↓') and different kinds of resolutions are involved. These vary greatly and relate only to the logic of the individual narrative. The resolution (designated by me as 'K') in ÞJÚ is Útgardaloki's explanation of his tricks (10a); in DB it is the punishment of Loki (10c); in ÞH Magni gets Gullfaxi and Óðinn comments (jealously) on this (10f); in *Þd*, the resolution could be identified as the skald's (poet's) praise of Þórr's might (10m), which might be considered a genre-dependent variation as the poem is oriented to different priorities to which communicating the narrative is secondary.

From Structural Analysis to Information about the World-Model

Propp's functions are applied to these narratives as a tool for analyzing their structure and to understanding the exchange between the world of the *æsir* and the otherworld as described in Table 1. Propp's pattern can be used as a tool to distinguish action-defined sequences in the narratives about gods' journeys. Most of the narratives include all the sequences, but it is noteworthy that ÞJÚ and ÞM do not include the preparatory and complication phase. They

begin at the point of departure, where Þórr sets off to go to Útgarðr or to confront Miðgarðsormr.¹⁷ All the narratives include the part of confrontation with a primary inhabitant of the otherworld, and this indicates that this is the whole purpose of telling the narrative. When the journey culminates with a visit to an otherworld inhabitant who is male, the confrontation involves violence or a threat to the safety of the journeying god. If the otherworld inhabitant is female, there is no primary threat to the gods' life and safety from her, but there is from donors. There is no donor situation in ÞÍ and *Hl*, which both relate the tale of Þjazi's Abduction of Íðunn. This is the only case where there is no donor, and it may be surmised that this sequence is a fairly constant element too. Both the donor situation and the confrontation may repeat the pattern of functions multiple times. Table 1 thus shows the following pattern for the majority of gods' journeys in *Snorra Edda*, eddic and skaldic poetry.

These patterns are generated as the minimal functions of a certain type of tales in Scandinavian mythology. It has been raised as a problem in the discussion of the method of constructing world-models that structuralism produces binary oppositions, even in circumstances where there are none. It has

been argued that structuralism reproduces a binary opposition that reflects a Christian rhetorical polarity between Heaven and Hell, and that this is mainly expressed in *Snorra Edda*. The above analyses show that a pattern of protagonist-antagonist exchanges may be generated from a specific type of narratives throughout the different genres of Scandinavian mythology. This pattern is indicative of a spatial structure within which the characters exercise these exchanges – a world-model. This model consists of:

1. A sanctum, an inviolable space belonging to the Scandinavian gods which must be protected at all costs from outside advance upon it.
2. An outfield where the inhabitants of the inner sanctum are vulnerable to attack and plots against their safety.
3. A 'realm beyond', or otherworld,¹⁹ to which the journeying representative must go in order to restore the imbalance that has been created by a violation or disturbance in the sanctum.

The functions of the dramatis personae in these tales reflect these aspects of the world-model of the mythology. The information about the world-model that this produces is highly abstract. However, abstract yet generally applicable information about the world-model of the mythology provides a

Table 1. Overview of the sequence of functions in gods' journeys.¹⁸

	Preparatory phase	Compliation	Donor situation	Confrontation
ÞJÚ:		↑	DEF G DEF DE-DE-DEF G	HI-HI-HI-HI-HIK↓
ÞM:		↑	DEF G DE-DE G	HI↓
DB:	α β ε ζ η θ	A/aBCP↑	DEG	H↓IK
ÞÍ:	α β η θ	A/aBCP↑		H↓IK
MP:	α β η θ	A(/a) P↑	DEF-DEF-DE-DE G	H↓IK
ÞH:	α β ε ζ η	ABCP↑	DEF	HIJ-HI-HI-K↓
ÞJG:	α β ε ζ η θ	A(BC)↑	DEF(P)-DE G DE G	HIK↓
ÆJH:	α β η θ	A/aB(C)↑	DEF G	HIK(↓)
<i>Skm</i> :	α γ δ	aBCP↑	DE G	HI-HI-HI-HI↓K
<i>Hym</i> :	α β (ε) η	A/aBC↑	D(E)F	HI-HI-HI G HI G HI-HI↓HIK
<i>Þrk</i> :		aB(C)P↑	DEF G DE-DEF G	HI-HI-HIK(↓)
<i>Bdr</i> :		a(B)CP↑	DE G	HIK(↓)
<i>Þd</i> :	η θ	A/aB(C)↑	DEF G DE G	HI-HI-HIK(↓)
<i>Hl</i> :	α ε ζ η θ	A/aB(C)P↑		HIK(↓)

contextualizing frame for approaching individual sources and narratives within the mythology (cf. Bradley, this volume, and also note 7 above).

Conclusion

Propp's narratological tools have been specifically chosen because of their applicability to this type of texts. The current scholarly environment seems to reflect a paradigmatic crisis (cf. Lewis-Peterson, this volume) that has been born from critique of Lévi-Strauss (Geertz 1973) and a tendency in Old Norse scholarship to distrust the usefulness of *Snorra Edda* because of its apparent Christian influence. It must be the point of developing methods not to do this simply on basis of opposition to existing tools, but to apply the most appropriate tool for a given type of texts. Structuralism has its advantages and certainly also some disadvantages, but to indiscriminately reject it as a method altogether would be disastrous. In the present case, I have applied the structuralist approach of Propp to the gods' journeys of Scandinavian mythology because these narratives have a structure that is suited to this type of analysis. This new application of the Proppian structuralist approach may be applied to other systems as well in order to produce information about principle and world-model structures, for example in medieval sagas, epic traditions, and modern experience narratives (cf. Latvala & Laurén, this volume). This method has the potential to be complementary to surveys of valuation associated with different types of movement and locations that can be revealed in large corpus-based studies of different traditions.

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Notes

1. World-models may be understood as a physical attribute to worldview, which represents the broader spectrum of cultural elements in ethnic identity. See also Osborne and Frog, this volume. On ethnic identity, see Glukhov & Glukhova, this volume.
2. The term 'Scandinavian mythology' is described here on the basis of the work by Snorri Sturluson called *Edda*, and of both skaldic and eddic poetry. Even though these are medieval Icelandic texts written in a West-Nordic language, the Danish (i.e. East Norse) chronicler Saxo Grammaticus uses this mythology in his *Gesta Danorum*, and it will be treated as generally representative. As evidenced below, scholarship also traditionally makes use of the ethnic term 'Scandinavian' rather than 'Old Norse' to refer to the mythology in relation to world-model analysis.
3. It must be underlined that this discussion is under development and should be seen as preliminary, as it is part of my PhD dissertation, scheduled for completion in August 2013.
4. See for instance Bugge 1880; Mogk 1923; Baetke 1950; von See 1988; and most recently Lassen 2011.
5. These are termed *frásagnir* and appear in *Edda* as longer narratives about the gods, almost invariably preceded by an identifying (formulaic) sentence such as: "Hann hóf þar frásögn at [...]" (*Skáldskaparmál* 1998: 1) ['He told the story that [...]']; "Þat er upphaf þessa máls at [...]" (*Gylfaginning* 2005: 37) ['The beginning of this tale is [...]']; or "Sjá saga er til þess at [...]" (*Skáldskaparmál* 1998: 4) ['The story about this is [...]']. On the term 'mythological fictions', see Clunies Ross 1992: 204. It is obvious that there are more myths than the extended narratives extant, but as a distinguishable genre of narratives there are approximately thirteen *frásagnir* in *Snorra Edda*.
6. For the sake of brevity *Rm*, *Psb*, *HS*, *OR*, *TJG* and *TJU* will not be included in the following.
7. Notably, *ÞJÚ* and *ÞM* seem to form a special case among the mythological fictions in *Snorra Edda*, and it is not entirely impossible that they are constructed to fit in the narrative frame of *Gylfaginning* for the purpose of insulting Þórr (see Frog 2011: 18–23). These two narratives lack both a preparatory phase and the complication (see below), and if they are indeed narrative constructions of the medieval period, they seem to contradict the notions of Clunies Ross & Martin that the adapted Proppian pattern reveals medieval redaction of myths, as they only make use of half the pattern. On the contrary, deviation from the traditional structural paradigm could be a symptom of non-traditional adaptation of narrative material.
8. It must be stressed that this is a generalized observation, and that some of the elements can and will occur in *Snorra Edda*, eddic and skaldic poetry. An example of this is, of course, the above-mentioned *ÞÍ*, where a marriage occurs.
9. Another scholar who has used Propp in worldview studies is Juha Pentikäinen (1978: 273–294) on Karelian folk-material.
10. In this instance, the two narratives *ÞJÚ* and *ÞM* in *Gylfaginning* about Þórr have been left out because of their different nature (see note 7 above).

11. *Þrk* is a special case because, if it had a preparatory phase, it could possibly take place inside Ásgarðr, where an outsider violates the inner sanctuary.
12. In TJG, TJU and *Þsb*, the ships are prepared for the journey. This has special importance in TJG and TJU because the preparation has a strong protective function in the hostile environment to the north beyond the sunlight. The element may also be noted to appear in the version of this narrative in ÞJG, where Þórr receives the staff and iron gloves from Griðr, although in this case it is function 'F' as a result of the encounter with the donor: 'D' 'E' 'F' (Propp 1968: 39–50). On a situation of equipping the hero as an indicator of more than a light journey, see below.
13. On this difference in Þórr's behavior, see Lindow 2001.
14. ÞH generally makes use of the same elements, but it distributes them a bit differently and their causality does not always correspond to the other narratives. This is because of its theme of a duel that is caused by the *jötunn*'s invasion of Ásgarðr, and it could thus be understood as a special narrative that deals with the problem of invasion.
15. In ÞH, as a special case, function 'G' also appears in between the preparatory phase and the complication, as Óðinn and Hrungrir return to Ásgarðr.
16. The encounter with Miðgarðsormr is not included here, because it is not the purpose of the journey. The fishing trip for Miðgarðsormr in this narrative is one in the series of tests leading to the final confrontation with the giant Hymir.
17. It could be argued that ÞJÚ appears to be the preparatory phase and complication leading up to the departure, donor situation and confrontation in ÞM, but the two narratives are separated in the text by Gylfi's comments and Hár's answer. The causal progression from ÞJÚ to ÞM is thus imposed from outside the internal narrative logic of ÞJÚ and ÞM by a narrating voice. This means that it cannot be assumed that they correspond to each other in the same way as the preparatory phase and complication do to the donor situation and confrontation.
18. Parentheses indicate that the function is presupposed from the narrative context.
19. This is not necessarily the same space as the outfield. It seems that at least in the narratives about Þjazi, there is a distinction between the *eyðimörkr* where the gods meet Þjazi and the realm that Þjazi rules. The notion of multiple versions of "outfield" and otherworld also seems present in some *fornaldarsögur* (Leslie 2009).

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A System of Techniques and Stratagems for Outlining a Traditional Ethnic Identity

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This paper presents the description of a system of techniques and stratagems applied to Mari folklore texts of different genres with the aim of outlining a traditional Mari ethnic identity.

The authors have analyzed the concept of ethnic identity, which has the status of an analytical term and is often defined as one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and one's identification with this group, as well as the part of one's thinking and feeling, sensation and intuition, volition and will (Jung 2003: 511–515). Ethnic identity in this paper is viewed as the authenticity of an ethnic culture to itself, considering culture as a triad system of images, symbols and values that reflect a nation's type of thinking and feeling.

The combination of techniques shown here could be of help to researchers of other cultures as this methodology makes it possible to:

- investigate the character and evolution of ethnic psychological time and space perception, which brings into existence a subsystem of images
- reveal the metaphorical character of numerals and colors as well as the representations of flora and fauna, typical of the ethnic landscape, thus leading to a

hierarchical enumeration of symbols embodying emotions and feelings

- describe ethnic values and to elucidate the systemic ties among them, as knowledge of ethnic values is of primary importance for the prevention of interethnic tension and conflicts

The complex analysis of an ethnic semiotic system, embracing images, symbols and values, deduced with the help of complex systemic analysis of folklore texts, can reveal the character of the correlation between sensory/emotional and abstract types of ethnic reality evaluation, leading to a better understanding of ethnic mentality and making possible a further prediction of the behavior of a typical representative of the culture (Glukhov & Glukhova 2007).

Algorithm of Research and Selection of Material

One difficulty in ethnic identity reconstruction lies in the absence of a standard by which one can assess and interpret ethnicity (cf. Phinney 1992). The authors offer an approach that allows a solution to this problem. As a standard for the analysis, the work proposes to use a rank (a place in a scale) of images, symbols and values in a histogram depicting probability

distributions of their mention in the genres analyzed. For any two probability histograms, a correlation coefficient, quantitatively showing coincidence of different nations' images, symbols and values (or in our case-different sub-ethnoses), can be calculated.

The algorithm of the research includes the following steps:

1. The process of reading texts with the aim of discerning images, symbols or values (referred to with the unifying term 'factor') after applying methods of semantic investigation (componential and contextual types of text and lexeme analysis).
2. The compilation of the list of factors.
3. The distribution of the texts according to the factors.
4. The estimation of factor incidence and a calculation of the probability of factor usage (the preparation of tables).
5. The ranking of factors in descending order of probability (the preparation of probability distribution histograms).
6. The singling out of dominant, complementary, auxiliary and insignificant factors by a dichotomous method, applying the principle of simple majority employed in mathematical statistics.

The described algorithm has been applied to Mari songs (2,118 texts), proverbs and sayings (7,590), myths and legends (177 texts) and Mari proper names (9,348).

One of the outcomes of the mathematical statistical method is deriving the histogram depicting probability distributions of the factors mentioned in the genres analyzed. The reliability of the results obtained is assured by highly illustrative, plausible evidence that embodies opinions on all phenomena of the nations' life and that captures peoples' interests, culled from thousands of folkloristic texts representing material as filtered through the Mari nations' memory over hundreds of years. As a starting point, the authors posit an almost self-evident idea: namely, that the more important a factor is for a Mari ethnos, the more often it will be mentioned in its texts, or that the whole meaning of the text will be devoted to this certain factor.

Identifying Mari Images of Time

A revealed subsystem of images in Mari culture has been based on the analysis of

psychological time perception in lyric songs as well as in proverbs and sayings. Time perception is analyzed with the help of five factors to which the authors refer:

1. Discreteness
2. Intensity
3. Emotional attitude
4. Cyclic recurrence
5. The possibility of prediction

By convention, *discreteness* is marked by '−'. In the analyzed songs, *discreteness* is expressed by the following lexeme combinations: 'end of love', 'everything is in the past', 'did not have enough time', 'haven't managed to do', 'will not happen'. In contrast, *continuity* as antithesis of discreteness is shown by such phrases as 'whole life', 'always', 'without end', 'will be/come/happen' and is marked by '+'.

Intensity is expressed by such words and phrases as 'much to do', 'quickly', 'cares', 'one must do it', 'one has to do it', and is marked as '+'. Absence of intensity is shown by the following word-combinations 'to wait for fate (what will happen)', 'no haste', 'slowly', and is marked by '−'.

Positive *emotional attitude* ('+') is revealed through such words and phrases as 'joy', 'marriage', 'love', 'happiness', 'beauty', 'a new life'. Negative emotions ('−') is revealed through fear of death, 'everything passes away', 'youth has gone', 'being sorry', 'regret', 'finiteness of youth'.

Cyclic recurrence, when referring to periods longer than a year, is marked '+'; when the mentioned periods is shorter than a year, it is marked '−'.

Forecasting, or the *possibility of prediction*, when representing a possibility, is marked with the positive mark ('+'). When representing impossibility expressed by the words and phrases: 'impossible', 'if', 'would like to', 'have thought as' etc., this is shown by the negative mark '−'.

The procedure of discerning factors is illustrated below with the song *Pervi cāsān šačdelna* ['We Were Not Born Happy'] as an example. Songs of each subethnos have been analysed similarly, then the averaged meanings of each factor have been deduced. The outcomes are tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1. Time perception factors probability distribution in Mari songs (three subethnoses)

№	Time perception factor	Number of mentions with positive connotation +	Probability of usage with positive connotation +	Number of mentions with negative connotation –	Probability of usage with negative connotation –	Total number	Total probability
1	Emotional evaluation/attitude	205	0,27	32	0,04	237	0,31
2	Possibility of prediction	121	0,16	87	0,115	208	0,28
3	Discreteness	21	0,028	157	0,208	178	0,238
4	Intensity	59	0,078	58	0,077	117	0,16
5	(Cyclic) recurrence	1	0,001	13	0,017	14	0,021

Перви цӓшӓн шачделна

Кого шӓргӓй покшалнет
Олма садет ак пелед.
Перви цӓшӓн шачделна,ⁱ
Бӓнде цӓшӓн ана ли.
Кӓшнӓй-кӓшнӓй, кырык вӓлнет,
Вулнан оксам погышым.
Вулнан оксан пецӓт уке –
Мӓлӓннӓ курым цӓш уке.ⁱⁱ
Йӓрӓн вӓлнӓй ӓдӓшӓм,
Кого макым ӓдӓшӓм,
Шошым шоӓшⁱⁱⁱ – пеледеш,ⁱⁱⁱ
Шӓжӓй шоӓшⁱⁱⁱ – вилеш.ⁱⁱⁱ
Бӓшке ӓти-ӓви гӓц
Айырлен кеӓш веремӓ шон.^{iv}
Бӓшке ӓти-ӓви сага
Курым Бӓлӓш Бӓш ли.

We Were Not Born Happy

In the middle of a big forest
The apple tree garden does not bloom.
If we were born unhappy,
We would never be happy.ⁱ
High up on the hill top
I gathered tin coins.
There is no stamp on the coins –
We are not happy during the whole life-
time.ⁱⁱ
On the garden-beds,
I sowed the double poppy.
Spring will comeⁱⁱⁱ – it will blossom,ⁱⁱⁱ
Autumn will comeⁱⁱⁱ – it will fall away.ⁱⁱⁱ
To go away from father and mother
The time has come.^{iv}
To live near father and mother
For everⁱ is not predestined.

Within this poem, (i) indicates a prognosis with the possibility of prediction [‘+’]. The absence of discreteness [‘+’] is indicated with (ii). Cyclic recurrence [‘-’] is denoted by (iii). Discreteness itself [‘-’] is depicted by (iv).

The psychological time perception factors are then shown graphically in the forms of differential and summarizing diagrams presented by Figures 1 and 2.

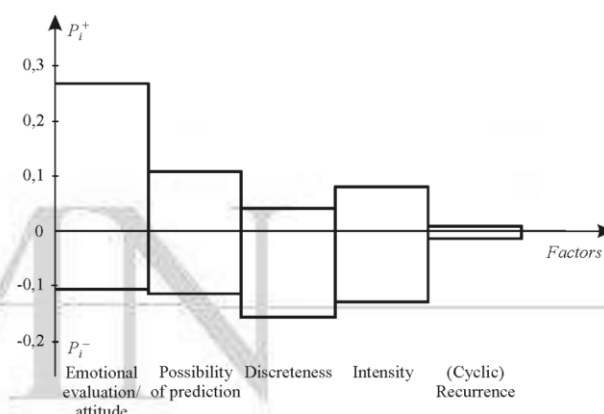


Figure 1. Averaged differential diagram of time perception factors probability distribution in Mari songs.

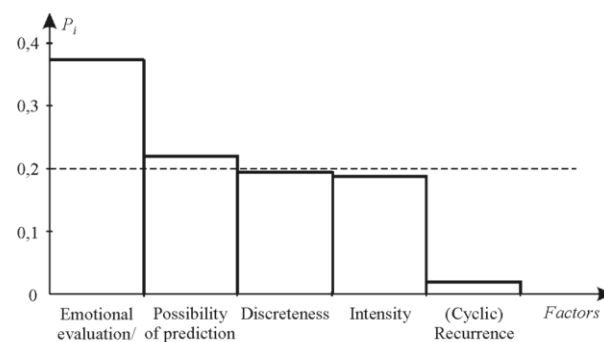


Figure 2. Averaged summarizing diagram of time perception factors probability distribution in Mari songs.

The diagrams clearly demonstrate that out of the five factors in the analyzed Mari songs, time is mainly perceived emotionally. Cyclic recurrence is felt least of all.

Analogous algorithm has been applied to the analysis of proverbs and sayings. Diagrams illustrate that together with

Table 2. Results of the analysis of space types mention number in Mari old songs.

№	Space type	Number of mentions/ frequency	Probability	№	Space type	Number of mentions/ frequency	Probability
1	Meadow, field	52	0,133	14	Sky, clouds	10	0,026
2	Forest	44	0,113	15	City	7	0,018
3	River	43	0,110	16	Tree top	5	0,013
4	Native village	28	0,072	17	Outhouses	5	0,013
5	Native home	27	0,069	18	Ravine	5	0,013
6	Hill	24	0,062	19	Swamp	4	0,01
7	Home farmstead	23	0,059	20	Native land	4	0,01
8	Garden/orchard	21	0,054	21	Market, shop	3	0,008
9	Another's village	18	0,046	22	Fair	3	0,008
10	Road	16	0,04	23	Mill,	2	0,005
11	Spring, stream	15	0,038	24	Barracks	2	0,005
12	Remote place	14	0,036	25	Larder/store-room	1	0,003
13	The Earth, world	13	0,033	26	Sauna	1	0,003

emotional evaluation, proverbs and sayings stress the *intensity* of time that is appraised negatively, reflecting people's attitude towards the brevity of life more vividly.

Revealing Mari Images of Space

The results of the psychological space perception in songs and proverbs have shown that images of space are mainly based on the *landscape* surrounding Mari villages. One of the most important parameters in psychological space perception is its *volume*. The authors pioneer the use of several parameters in combination to characterize the *volume* of the perceived space. The parameters used for its analysis are:

1. Topography (description of surface shape and other features)
2. Type of space (an area / location, place)
3. Space attainability
4. Explored possibilities of space
5. Space value
6. Arrangement of the physical qualities of space

The complex combination of volume parameters leads to the creation of different space types. The *space types* used in Mari proverbs and songs, expressed by lexemes in their direct meaning, vary from 16 to 32, with the dominant group from three (in proverbs) to six (in songs), which create ethnic images of space.

The outcomes of the psychological space perception, especially types of space

frequency, in old songs are shown graphically in the form of a diagram (Figure 3). The same technique has been applied to Mari modern songs (Glukhov & Glukhova 2007: 70–76) as well as to proverbs and sayings (Glukhov & Glukhova 2007: 53–62). The conclusions have also been presented as tables and diagrams.

Determining and Interpreting Mari Symbols

The subsystem of typical images deduced mainly from folksongs and proverbs shows close ties with the system of symbols. A symbol differs from an image by a greater degree of generalization and typicality. Their meanings are understood in texts. The analysis of the subsystem of symbols has been carried out on the material of Mari proper names and lyric songs and it has shown that in Mari ethnic culture, emotions and feelings are expressed with the help of *five leading groups of symbols*. Statistical analysis, together with a dichotomous method, reveals the most widespread names of plants, numerals, colors, birds and animals, organized into groups of dominant, auxiliary and additional symbols, significant for the Mari. The data on each group have been shown in tables and then presented in the form of histograms of probabilities of plants, numerals, colors, animals and birds mentioned by number in Mari songs (Glukhov & Glukhova 2007: 77–98).

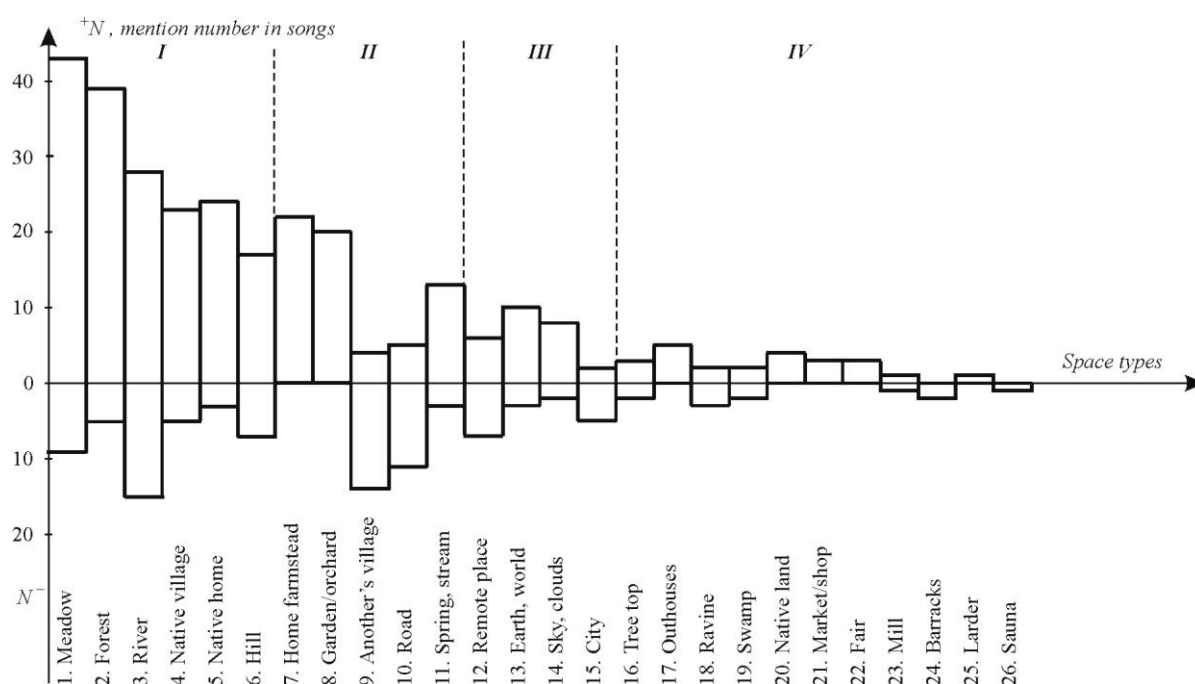


Figure 3. Differential diagram of space types mention number in Mari old songs.

The analysis and interpretation of Mari ethnic names (9,348) has revealed their specific semantic and pragmatic properties. Investigation into the semantic nature of the names brought to light the subsystems of (nine dominant) ethnic symbols and (five dominant) values which have also been summarized in tables and histograms. The characteristic features of the form of Mari proper names – their average length (between four and ten letters/sounds) and distinct sound pattern (the most spread initial sounds are [j][k][t][a][p][o][θ], and the typical final sounds are [j][k][a][p][s]) have also been discovered. A summary of the meanings of all of these reveals that Mari proper personal names were created in a patriarchal society in a tribal system during the Iron Age, under the strong influence of neighboring tribes in a forest zone (Glukhov & Glukhova 2007: 99–117). Thus in comparison with folklore genres that have been analyzed, Mari names contain symbolically elements of several ethnocultural substrata, showing the transition to agrarian settlements as well as the appearance of new technologies in the Iron Age (Frog 2011: 25–26).

Describing Mari Values

The Mari value subsystem is the next component of the Mari ethnic cultural triad.

Different ethnos's values are not the same, and this fact may lead to misunderstandings when peoples come into contact. Therefore *awareness of* and *acquaintance with* value systems is a high priority for intercultural communication. It is axiomatic that there are common moral standards, principles and norms, but the importance, diversity and systemic ties among them are different.

The term “value” is understood in different ways. Dictionaries define it both in terms of:

- abstract concepts of worth, principle standards or qualities considered worthwhile or desirable, and
- material objects (e.g. an apartment, a car, a precious ring or painting etc.). In a word – what we think is good or is significant to us

The values expressed in Mari proverbs and sayings refer mainly to a sphere of notions, standards and qualities, but not to the material standards of life.

Study of the values of individuals and social groups, not to mention of a whole society, is difficult. The fundamental problem is to find proper indicators of a given value. Proverbs and sayings in Mari culture are used in their direct and figurative meanings, therefore semantic analysis of these texts is complemented by factor analysis, a statistical data method used to reduce the number of variables (values in our case) and to see their

interrelation. The essence of the applied technique lies in the distribution of proverbs and sayings into groups by the type of values (factors) expressed in them and in further calculation of the *value mention* in each group. Number of values will be different and dependent on their significance to the nation. The more important the value is the more often it is mentioned in the texts. This allows the operation of ranking values in order of their priority which:

- shows a system of priorities
- differentiates values by their importance
- predicts the choice of values in concrete situations

One more reason for such method choice (and therefore the further taxonomy of factors) lies in the fact that each value represents a certain goal to be achieved. Owing to a limited number of human resources (time, space, energy, etc.), one has to inevitably choose among the values. Therefore it is suggested that all mentioned values should be divided into four groups:

- I. Main/dominant values
- II. Auxiliary values
- III. Additional values
- IV. Insignificant values

The classification follows the consecutive dichotomy technique based on the choice by simple majority.

First, we calculated the percentage content of each value in the total sum of priorities. Then we added up all the figures together, beginning with the largest until the total exceeded 50%. The biggest group was called 'main', 'dominant'. For the rest of the values (factors), the same procedure described above was carried out twice. Thus, the auxiliary, additional and insignificant groups – eight values all in all – are revealed.

According to a universal dialectic principle of complementarity, each value might manifest itself in two ways: positively and negatively. This division is justified by the thought that any attitude might be expressed either as a laudation of some virtue or as a disapproval of its antipode. Therefore one might get additional information on values considering negative or positive mention

separately. The number 'eight' does not appear random: operational memory has an average volume, ranging from five to nine units (Dushkov 2002: 444), and the number of values revealed appears in that range. These eight groups, depicted in Figure 4, are: family (21%), ethics (20%), labour (14.4 %), knowledge (13%), food (12.3), speech (9%), wealth (7.2), and health (2.9%). We took into account the figurative meaning of the proverbs and sayings as well as the generalized direct meaning of the chosen mini-texts. It can be shown in the following examples: *family* (Парня шуко гынат, иктыжымат руал шуымо ок шу ['Fingers are many, but you will not cut any']); *respect for parents* (Авалан кеч копавундашешет мунопулашкам шолто, садак парымыште лият ['Even if you make an omelette on your own palm still you will be in debt to your mother']).

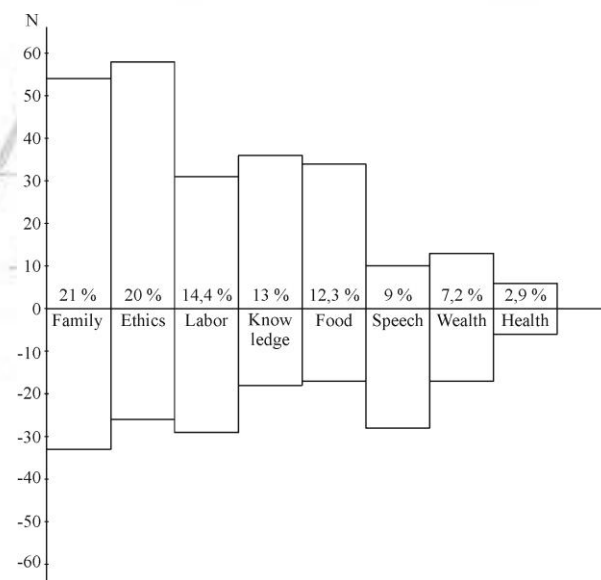


Figure 4. Differential factor diagram of Mari ethnic values.

Analyzing these data, we draw the conclusion that the dominant values for the Mari are: *family, ethics, labor*. The group of auxiliary values is made up of two – *knowledge* and *food*. Additional values embrace such factors as *speech* and *wealth*. And of secondary importance, the least vital is *health*. *Family, ethics, knowledge* and *food* are mainly positively assessed. *Speech* and *wealth* are evaluated more negatively than positively. Thus, diagram analysis shows that in Mari proverbs and sayings, we can find a high

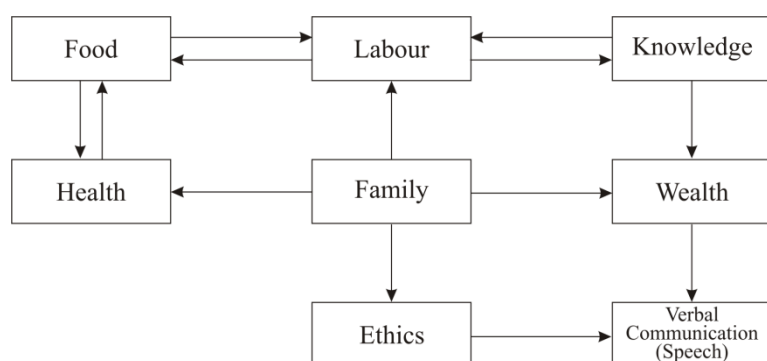


Figure 5. The Mari ethnic values represented in proverbs and sayings.

evaluation of the *family*, *ethics* and *work* and absence of striving for *wealth* and *money*. The difficult life conditions of the Mari determined *labor* as the main value and, more negative in comparison with it, is the evaluation of *speech*. It is interesting to note that the factor *food* occupies the low, fifth place, and *health* is valued least of all.

In addition to its elements/factors, any system is characterized by the type and number of ties among these. Proverbs and sayings represent a reliable data set for establishing these ties, as nearly all of them contain a judgment on causal, equivalent or complementary relations. Relying on this assumption, we may show the links within the system graphically, depicting them as lines and arrows (Figure 5). It would appear reasonable that main systemic elements (factors) should be arranged in the center of a diagram and be shown by 'bold' lines connected with arrows. Arrow directions mainly show a cause and effect relationship; ties depicted by two opposite arrows show interaction of a relationship of equivalence or interdependence.

Specifying Mari Ethical Values

The Mari ethnic ethical system is also analyzed. The authors show the vices and moral flaws disapproved of by the Mari in their proverbs and sayings. Mari proverbs and sayings criticize such ethical vices as: *laziness* (Йолагай почеш мардеж омсам петыра ['Wind closes the doors after the lazy']); *lies* (Ик гана шойыштат, колымешкет шоячелият ['Lie only once and you will be labeled a liar for the rest of the life']); *stupidity* (Ушдымо вуй тулдымо понар гай ['A head without brains is like a lamp without light' or

'An empty head is like a lamp without light']); *violence, aggression* (Кредалше агытан вуйжым йомдара ['A fighting rooster loses its head']); *greed* (Поянын намысыжын пундашыже уке ['A rich man's greed is bottomless']); *ingratitude* (Пурь – пу вуйышты, тау – Тамарай вуйышты ['Kindness is on the tree top and gratitude is near the village of Tamaraikino' (a non-existent

place)]); *cowardice* (Меранг коваште дене кўрыкым ургыктет гын, пий опталтыме еда кушкедалтеш ['A coat made of hare skins tears off every time a dog barks']); *heavy drinking* (Арака кленчашке ончалат гын, коеш: кўшнō – пире, кыдалне – маска, йымалне – сōсна ['If you look into the vodka bottle, you will see a wolf at the top, a bear in the middle, and a swine at the bottom']); *theft* (Икте шолыштеш, нылле иктылан йолаже лиеш ['One steals – forty are suspected']); *envy* (Енгын ватыже, марийже эре мотор ['The husbands and wives of others are always beautiful']). Once calculated, the data on the Mari ethical system are tabulated and constitute the basis for drawing a histogram of probabilities.

Semantic investigation of 9,348 Mari proper names has shown that they contain an inventory of 21 values, enumerated in the table and graphically presented by histograms. The main group includes five of them (Glukhov & Glukhova 2007: 137–144).

Conclusion: A Systemic Character of Mari Identity

The authors hold that their research of Mari ethnic culture in its folklore genres has shown the main aspects of Mari collective consciousness. Three leading subsystems – a subsystem of images, a subsystem of symbols and a subsystem of values – show the character of a nation's thinking and feeling, demonstrating a harmonious correlation among sensory-pictorial, pictorial and rational types of reality evaluation. Psychological time perception is harmonious and emotional. Out of the five factors singled out in this study, only cyclic recurrence is not well represented. Ethnic time images are associated with the

blooming of flowers, trees and plants and their withering.

The evolution of ethnic space perception shows the change of three leading images of native land – starting with a narrow forest path (leading to a distant place where life is much better than in a native place), through the image of meadows and fields (surrounding a native village), and finishing with a village street with one's own house, garden and orchard.

The analysis and interpretation of the symbolic meanings of plants, numerals, colors, birds, and animals reveal the unique ethnic system of symbols reflecting an emotional evaluation of life phenomena. As the Mari culture is characterized by animistic beliefs and the worship of trees and forests, the investigated genres lack images and symbols typical of monotheistic religions. The essential idea expressed in the system of leading Mari symbols, especially in names, comes down to the reproduction of the clan in a nuclear, monogamous family within a large extended family.

The Mari ethnic system of values embraces a wide range of priorities; of which eight are highlighted as the most important. The list of these priorities may seem trivial, but they show a wise economy of resources for clan survival under severe climatic circumstances, limiting the consumption of resources, as well as complicated interpersonal relationships within a large extended family.

The reconstructed and analyzed subsystems of images, symbols and values constituting Mari ethnic identity have no counterparts in the described cultures of the world, and being authentic and unique, they organize the complete and exclusive triad-system of Mari culture.

Acknowledgements: I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Frog for his generous and valuable comments and suggestions which helped to explain several ideas and restructure an earlier version of the article. My special thanks are also due to Ms. Helen F. Leslie for proofreading and editing my English text, thus helping to make the style clear and lucid.

Notes

1. The analysis of folklore collections shows that proverbs and sayings, for example, can express appreciation of 'beauty', 'freedom', 'friendship', 'power', warn against 'fate', show 'cause and effect' relations as well as 'different character features', describe 'natural calamities', give 'different advice', etc. They are not numerous. In addition, many small thematic groups, embracing ethnic values, such as 'diligent people' and 'lazy people and laziness', or 'children and parents', 'family relationships', 'love and marriage' can be united into larger and more general categories, thus constituting eight chosen groups.

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COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Conferences and Seminars

Conference Report: Old Norse Folklorist Network Meeting

1st–3rd December 2011, Tartu, Estonia

Triin Laidoner, University of Aberdeen

As the Fairy-tale stands related to legend, so does legend to history, and (we may add) so does history to real life. [...] The ancient mythos, however, combines to some extent the qualities of fairy-tale and legend; untrammelled in its flight, it can yet settle down in a local home. (Grimm 1885: xv.)

The legendary German scholar Jacob Grimm (1785–1863) treated folk culture as living history. For him, folktales were remnants of old myths long suppressed by Christianity but still surviving in rural areas, and therefore, essential components for the study of Old Norse religion and mythology. Our modern understanding and interpretation of folklore nearly two hundred years after Grimm's time is perhaps more cautious and limited in its scope of use and generalisation. However, folklore studies have a long history that has continued to this day, and academic interest in folklore has widely increased in recent years. That folklore is an essential part of cultural heritage, no one is likely to deny. This vision was amply demonstrated by the first Old Norse Folklorist Network Meeting, held from the 1st to the 3rd of December 2011 in Tartu, Estonia. The event, funded by the Swedish Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and hosted by the Department of Scandinavian Studies at The University of Tartu, certainly justified the two strands in the title, bringing together both Old Norse scholars and folklorists from various universities to discuss the future development of Old Norse studies.

The idea for the foundation of the Old Norse Folklorist Network grew out of the New Focus on Retrospective Methods conference held on the 13th–14th December, 2010, in Bergen, Norway. The Bergen conference was initiated and organised by

Eldar Heide, on whose initiative the Retrospective Methods Network was founded in 2009 with the purpose of developing retrospective studies in a wider sense. As emphasised by the Professor of Scandinavian Studies in Tartu, Daniel Sävborg, the Old Norse Folklorist Network aims to complement its predecessor and discuss the problems concerned with the use of late sources, with special focus on the use of folklore. The first meeting of the Old Norse Folklorist Network was intended mainly as an opening event, with the purpose of provoking fresh ideas on research directions and methods, and allowing members to pick up ideas from each other. The programme of the first meeting thus consisted of four broad thematic areas: the otherworld in sagas and in folklore, the question of continuity, learned tradition and folk tradition, and finally, reconstruction. Prior to the meeting, participants had been provided with the 'manifesto' of the Old Norse Folklorist Network, as well as guiding questions and examples from different sources, with the aim of offering a starting point and a clearer idea of the structure and purpose of the event. The symposium was certainly unconventional in its arrangement, consisting mainly of workshops. Four plenary papers were nevertheless presented by different speakers, designed to represent the four sections and to raise questions for discussion. Group workshops were scheduled after each talk. These allowed every participant – in a free form – to address the proposed issues. Following the workshops, each of the groups presented a report of the discussion and

perspectives provided by the various personal and theoretical viewpoints.

A reception was held at the close of the first day in Ülikooli Kohvik ['The University Coffee-Shop'] located next to the main university building. An opening speech was given by the founders of the Network – Daniel Sävborg and Karen Bek-Pedersen – who introduced the background and purpose of the meeting and gave everyone a warm welcome. Along with a selection of drinks and snacks, the Network members had the chance to get acquainted and give each other a hearty welcome. The relaxed atmosphere of the event permitted an informal exchange of thoughts and sparked enthusiasm in the guests already on the first evening. "After all, a lot of the best ideas are born during coffee breaks," as Bek-Pedersen noted with amusement. Indeed, owing to the helpful students of Tartu University, the workshops over the next two days were interspersed with coffee breaks and lunch provided for all.

The meeting kicked off the next morning at the Department of Scandinavian Studies. The first speaker was Aðalheiður Guðmundsóttir, who presented her ideas on the first of the four topics on the agenda – the otherworld. Aðalheiður discussed the concept of otherworld in both folklore and the sagas, with special emphasis on the *fornaldarsögur*. She raised various important issues regarding the fantastic and supernatural in these sources and how it could be approached. Can *fornaldarsögur* be treated as folklore? As Aðalheiður maintained, the *fornaldarsögur* can contain elements typical to folktales, however, they are structurally more complex than folktales and are not necessarily subject to the same rules. Therefore they cannot be treated with exactly the same analytical methods, she concluded.

After a cup of coffee and light snack, it was time for discussion. The members of the Network were divided into groups of five or six, consisting of people of various nationalities and backgrounds and ranging from professors to students, in order to help generate ideas from different perspectives. Each group was allowed an hour and a half to discuss among themselves the research strategies they would like to pursue and

present to the other groups. After a short break for re-caffination and back-stretching, the guests gathered again and one member of each group conducted a feedback session in which ideas, opinions, experiences, conclusions, recommendations etc. that had been covered during the session were highlighted for the rest of the participants. The presentations were followed by lunch at restaurant Volga.

The afternoon saw another plenary paper and a session of workshops. Stephen Mitchell carried the group forward with his presentation on continuity between Old Norse sources and later folklore. Mitchell discussed the difference between literary and oral tradition, the different authority and emphasis they have, and how oral cultures function. Particularly interesting was Mitchell's analysis of a 15th century Swedish court trial of two men accused of Church theft and of serving Óðinn. As Mitchell noted, this, and other later sources, demonstrate the continuity of certain Odinic elements in Swedish popular tradition where a figure with this name – despite the changed cultural scene – is often associated with wealth. Mitchell's paper was followed by another coffee break, group workshops and presentations of the topics covered by each of the groups. Later the same evening, a guided town walk in Tartu was arranged for those interested.

The second day of the meeting started under grey, rainy skies, with a plenary presentation to plenty of warm and friendly faces. The first speaker of the day was Thomas DuBois, who shared thoughts on learned and folk tradition, discussed the objectivity of saga-writers and brought to attention different aspects of their personal history, attitudes and agendas. As DuBois noted, the main difficulty for us is to decide which elements are based on literate channels and which on oral. How learned were the Icelandic saga-writers? Do they belong somewhere between folk and learned culture? In one way or another, we must credit saga-writers with taking an active part in oral tradition, DuBois concluded.

The programme again continued with a brief coffee break, workshops related to the theme and presentations followed by lunch.

At the request of several guests to meet other Network members, people were re-arranged into new work groups. The fourth and final session – revolving around the idea of the reconstruction of past traditions – was opened by Karen Bek-Pedersen, whose lively and humorous comparison of her friend's dead crab and its empty shell with our modern attempt to reconstruct old traditions, made the faces in the audience break into smiles. An empty shell is not a crab; yet a crab without its shell is not a crab either, Bek-Pedersen argued. The same applies to our Old Norse sources – the different elements that are combined in these various pieces of evidence that have come down to us cannot exist independently. But how do we go about studying the possible meanings of those fragments? And more importantly, is it right to re-construct? Are we re-constructing or constructing? And what happens if we end up having more claws than a crab could have? Although our reconstructed drafts and new methodologies are problematic and never offer final results, they are enlightening and relevant, Bek-Pedersen conceded. The challenging questions proposed by her were more than enough to engage people in lively discussions for the next ninety minutes.

The final workshops and presentations, in conjunction with coffee breaks, were then rounded off by a final overall discussion of next steps, future prospects and the message of the meeting. Although the themes of discussion and presentations covered a very broad range of issues, they underlined a

central theme: progress requires collaborative effort across a number of disciplines. It is necessary to involve people from outside disciplines to participate – particularly professional folklorists, – to enhance and explore different research perspectives. The objective of the first meeting was to explore the importance of folklore in Old Norse studies, to facilitate an international discussion and develop recommendations for future activities. The future workshops, as was collectively agreed, should also focus on more particular case studies, instead of abstract theories. The positive acknowledgements and energetic attitudes ensured that our views will continue to evolve and promote other similar meetings and conferences in the future.

The first Old Norse Folklorist Network meeting was brought to a successful close by a final dinner at the restaurant Volga and final words of thanks, after which it was, sadly, time to say goodbye. The meeting must be reckoned a successful and thought-provoking event. Moreover, its unique setup, allowing a great sense of interaction for all of the event participants, created a greater level of freedom and a very positive atmosphere. One can only hope that next time the weather spirits will not forget to turn on their snow mills.

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Conference Announcement: VAF III: Identity and Identification and the Viking Age in Finland (with Special Emphasis on the Åland Islands)

3rd–4th September 2012, Mariehamn, Åland

Joonas Ahola, University of Helsinki, and Frog, University of Helsinki

The Viking Age in Finland (VAF) is a collaborative interdisciplinary research project which undertakes to explore and assess the significance of the Viking Age (ca. 800–1050) for cultural areas and linguistic-cultural groups in regions east of Sweden to Lake Onega, and North of the Gulf of Finland up to the White Sea, and to a lesser extent the Barents Sea more generally. The pilot year of

the project was 2011, organized around two seminars hosted by Folklore Studies (University of Helsinki), made possible thanks to support from the Finnish Cultural Foundation. The VAF seminars seek to construct synthetic, cross-disciplinary perspectives on the cultures and regions within the scope of the project in relation to the relevance (and applicability) of the Viking

Age to them according to the perspectives of diverse disciplines.



VIKING AGE IN FINLAND

The third VAF seminar “Identity and identification and the Viking Age in Finland (with Special Emphasis on the Åland Islands)” will be held in cooperation with the Åland Museum. This seminar approaches the issues of defining groups of people from within and externally, and how identity and identification function within groups and the relationships between them. The seminar invites discussions relevant to approaching the Viking Age around the following topics:

- Group formation in the processes of demonstrating difference from and similarity to a group in the interaction between people
 - The role of language groups and multilingualism in groups and group formation
 - The role of other cultural practices or items that appear as identity-markers or attributes by which groups are differentiated
 - The interplay between indigenous and adopted cultural phenomena in the identification process
- Identification as active construction of one’s identity in these processes and identity as a result of these processes, enabling identity generally as a tool in research
- Expressions of identity and cultural phenomena that enhanced identity that are observable in different materials that shed light upon the Viking Age – such as material culture, technologies, livelihoods, forms of residence, ritual practices, narrative traditions and language
 - The problem of accurately (or inaccurately) correlating data on

identity or identification and how such problems can be addressed

The theme of this seminar offers the possibility also to discuss interpretations and the utilization of the Viking Age in later historical periods, such as in new social and political structures where identity has been and is being discussed and constructed through reflections upon the past. Åland is a relevant and interesting venue and frame of reference for discussing these issues in general and especially with regard to the Viking Age in Finland. Åland formed and continues to form a border area between Scandinavia, to which the whole Viking Age is largely ascribed, and Finland. The connections between Scandinavia and Finland undoubtedly took place largely via Åland, and this could not happen without leaving a trace of these connections. Nevertheless, the Viking Age in Åland as reflected, for example in the archaeological record, remains unfamiliar in both Finland and Scandinavia, and the position of Åland in the history of Finland in particular has been controversial in many ways. The present seminar is intended to help open those discussions and raise awareness of the historical significance of Åland along with the important research carried out there.

The intention is that speakers bring discussion and data from the disciplines they represent to specialists from OTHER disciplines in order to open discussion in which we can investigate and negotiate relationships between them. In many seminars, the central question of each participant in both presenting and listening to papers is: ‘How is this useful to me?’ In this seminar, it is our hope that participants will arrive with the questions: ‘How is what I do useful to scholars from other disciplines? How can I help to make the data, resources and insights from my field intellectually accessible to scholars from other fields? How can I help scholars from other fields avoid using data or resources from my field inappropriately?’

Each speaker will have approximately one hour, of which 20 minutes should be estimated for an opening presentation, followed by 40 minutes for discussion. This strategy is intended to promote discussion and

allow time for explanations and dialogue among representatives of diverse disciplines. The language of the seminar will be English.

VAF III will be held in cooperation with the Åland Museum 3rd–4th September 2012, Mariehamn, Åland, on the premises of the

Åland Museum. The event will be open to the public. If you are interested in attending this event or participating with a presentation, please contact Joonas Ahola (joonas.ahola@helsinki.fi) or Frog (mr.frog@helsinki.fi) for more information.

Meeting of the Retrospective Methods Network's Old Norse Scholars

9th August 2012, Aarhus, Denmark

Helen F. Leslie, University of Bergen

The Retrospective Methods Network (RMN) has become an important and fruitful meeting place for researchers across a variety of disciplines. Dissemination of research, networking and the formation of new projects are only some of the valuable outcomes of this network. Accessibility and communication is crucial for its ongoing success. Thanks to the internet, this is possible for all our colleagues across the world. That said, there is still great importance in the possibility of meeting and discussing face to face and members of the RMN need to take advantage of this possibility when opportunity arises. The 15th International Saga Conference (5th–11th August 2012, Aarhus, Denmark) presents just such an opportunity for scholars of Old Norse studies through whom the RMN initially formed, and was planned at the first meeting of the RMN (13th–14th September 2010, Bergen, Norway).

The informal meeting will be held at the Saga Conference at Aarhus University following the conclusion of the day's sessions on Thursday, August 9th, at 16:30. The meeting will be open to any wishing to attend. Of course, we are aware that members of the RMN will not be able to attend, especially those without immediate interest in the conference. Nevertheless, this conference offers a potentially pleasant and fruitful opportunity that could not be passed by.

Some potential topics to be opened at the meeting include:

- The scope of the RMN with perspectives on both active and passive members

- Emerging groups, events, activities and communications within the RMN:
 - The Austmarr Network
 - The Old Norse Folklorist Network
 - Activities in Bergen
 - A network focusing on Uralic Cultures
 - *RMN Newsletter*
- What has the RMN done; how useful has it been?
- The next RMN meeting
 - Organizing and coordinating research projects
- Additional future plans

If you are not planning to attend the Saga Conference but would like to raise any points at the meeting, please contact Helen F. Leslie at Helen.Leslie@cms.uib.no, who will happily present your opinions to those present. The precise location of the meeting has not yet been fixed. That information will be made available as soon as possible. If you would like to insure that you receive this information by e-mail, please contact Leslie at the address listed above.

A report on this meeting will be published in the December 2012 issue of *RMN Newsletter*. We hope that in the near future, the RMN will be able to have meetings where different cross-sections of our membership are present. *RMN Newsletter's* online venue will continue to ensure that the network remains as dynamic as possible, and the editors hope that members of the RMN, representing diverse fields and disciplines, continue their exchange of ideas and to foster productive academic cooperation – both online and face to face when the opportunity arises!

PEOPLE

Research Reports

Shamans, Christians, and Things in Between: Riddles of Cultural Transition in Medieval Karelia

Frog, University of Helsinki

Paper presented at Conversions and Ideological Changes in Middle Ages in Comparative Perspective, organized by the Institute of History, University of Rzeszów, 29th September – 1st October 2011, Rzeszów, Poland.

Finnic cultures belong to the Finno-Ugric and more broadly to the Uralic language families. Finnic cultures can therefore be reasonably hypothesized to have carried a reflex of Northern Eurasian or ‘classic’ shamanism as part of that linguistic-cultural heritage. By the 19th century, shamanism and some of its most basic conceptual foundations were no longer maintained in North Finnic cultures. Evidence of earlier shamanic ethnocultural substrata remains evident in linguistic and folkloric evidence. By this late period, a different type of ritual specialist called a *tietäjä* [‘one who knows, knower’] had emerged under Germanic influence in particular. This paper will outline the evidence of a transition from the institution of the ‘shaman’ to the institution of the ‘*tietäjä*’ as a response to Germanic contact. Although this process potentially began very early, comparative evidence suggests that it occurred after the introduction of iron-working technologies and most probably was already established in southern coastal regions of Finland before the Viking Age. This provides a foundation for discussing problematic questions concerning when and how this new institution spread through the North Finnic linguistic-cultural areas.

The paper opens a discussion of the problem of the spread of the *tietäjä*-institution and the parallel villainization of ‘shamanism’.

This process was associated with a radical discontinuity in conceptions of the soul and strategies for interaction with the unseen world. It involved reconceptualising mythic figures and their relationships to one another. The rise of the institution of the *tietäjä* to the exclusion of the vernacular shaman can be approached as a conversion process affiliated with a ‘new’ ideological system. The new ideological system appears connected with a (potentially) ‘new’ technology of verbal magic. The paper will consider population movements from western Finland eastward, and the role of the Christianization process as an ideological system that interacted with both the institutions of the *tietäjä* and the ‘shaman’.

Any outline of the process of changing ideologies in medieval Karelia is necessarily speculative owing to the lateness of the sources. Rather than ‘solid’ conclusions about this process, this paper seeks to offer an overview of the problems and to construct a broad and flexible working model for approaching an era of cultural history, which is as yet poorly understood. A version of this paper will appear in a collection of selected proceedings from the conference edited by Rudolf Simek and Leszek Słupecki to appear in the *Studia Mediaevalia Septentrionalia* series.

Systemic Reconstruction of Mari Ethnic Identity

Natalia Glukhova, Mari State University

Paper presented at the Fifth International Symposium on Finno-Ugric Languages: The Finno-Ugric Contribution to International Research on Folklore, Myth and Cultural Identity, organized by the Department of Finno-Ugric Languages and Cultures, University of Groningen, 7th–9th June 2011, Groningen, the Netherlands.

The authors examine the core psychological components of Mari ethnic identity reconstructed from authentic folklore texts of different genres. The outcomes of cognitive psychological processes and emotional reactions are kept in a nation's memory in different folklore genres. The research has shown that the innermost part of the nation's past experience is organized into three leading subsystems: a subsystem of images, a subsystem of symbols and a subsystem of values. They show the character of nation's feeling and thinking. The authors also analyze the nations' perception of time and space, and obtain new results.

In order to reconstruct Mari ethnic identity, the research includes a methodological basis resting on systems theory, which, in turn, involves decision-making theory as well as factor and statistical analysis, with a

dichotomous method applying the principle of simple majority and complemented by methods of semantic investigation. The reliability of the results obtained has been assured by highly illustrative, plausible evidence filtered through the Mari nation's memory over hundreds of years and spread out over vast territories and embodying opinions on all the phenomena of the nation's life and showing people's interests. These were culled from Mari folklore genres such as songs (2,118 texts), proverbs and sayings (7,590), myths (177). The results of the Mari proper names (9,348) analysis are also used in the research. The authors use graphical representations of the data obtained: tables, summarizing and differential diagrams, histograms of probabilities and cumulative curves and matrices.

Travel and Holy Islands in *Eireks saga víðförla* and *Eiríks saga rauða*

Mart Kuldkepp, University of Tartu

Paper presented at Supernatural Places: The 6th Nordic-Celtic-Baltic Folklore Symposium, organized by the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore and the Department of Scandinavian Studies, University of Tartu, 4th–7th June 2012, Tartu, Estonia.

Building on Eldar Heide's (2011) idea that an important aspect of the otherworldly and "holy island" imagery in literature and folklore is the motif of crossing water, I examine two Old Icelandic texts that describe journeys to half-mythical places lying beyond the sea. Although the two sagas in question, *Eireks saga víðförla* and *Eiríks saga rauða* (in which I will focus on the story of Leifr Eriksson's discovery of Vinland) are in many ways different in both form and content, I argue that there is a commonality in how the idea of attaining Christian holiness is connected to the undertaking of a journey to faraway islands.

In both cases, it is the journey towards a liminal land at the world's end – Vinland and 'The Third India' – that enables Christian

motifs to enter the 'realistic' saga narrative. As movement in space is thus invested with symbolic meaning, crossing the sea becomes an allegory of baptism and the holy island something equivalent to Paradise, while the travelers Leifr and Eirekr themselves lose a degree of their 'humanity' during the journey and become more saint-like. These traits, although much stronger in *Eireks saga víðförla*, are nevertheless detectable in the much more well-known *Eiríks saga rauða* and I think that a comparison between these two might better illuminate this aspect of the latter.

Proceeding from that, I propose that one way of conceptualizing holiness, or even 'the supernatural' in general in Old Norse sagas, is to consider it as a function of distance, which

can be geographical, but also temporal or even social. In this light, places, people or objects that appear to be especially otherworldly (grave mounds, sacred groves, churches, ancestors, foreigners, berserks, swords, gold rings and so forth) can be understood as shortcuts (in time, space or social order) that lead outside conventional

reality in much the same way that a the journey over the sea to the world's end would.

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Heide, Eldar. 2011. "Holy Islands and the Otherworld: Places Beyond Water". In *Isolated Islands in Medieval Nature, Culture and Mind*. Ed. Gerhard Jaritz & Torstein Jørgensen. CEU Medievalia 14; The Muhu Proceedings 2. Budapest; Bergen: Central European University; Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen. Pp. 57–80.

Within and between Languages: Spheres and Functions of Different Languages in Written and Oral Practical Communication in the Late Medieval Baltic Sea Region

Ilkka Leskelä, University of Helsinki

Paper presented at Register: Intersections of Language, Context and Communication, organized by Folklore Studies, University of Helsinki, and the Academy of Finland project Oral and Literary Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Baltic Sea Region of the Finnish Literature Society, 23th–25th May 2012, Helsinki, Finland.

Based on examples from the letter archives of Pawel Scheel and the Sture family, the city council records of Stockholm and the diplomatic correspondence of Viipuri castellans, I discuss the use of different languages and of variances within one language in various spheres of correspondence between medieval Sweden and the Hanseatic cities.

In the multi-linguistic northern Baltic Sea region, with written Latin, Old Swedish and Low Middle German and spoken Finnish and Estonian, the choice of language used in correspondence followed established customs. Juridical documents were written in the language of the rulers (Swedish or German), German almost totally dominated in overseas correspondence, and Latin remained the language of diplomacy and of the learned elite (clergy).

Within these writing traditions, well-established formulas guided expression. However, at times these formulas were broken, and non-customary languages were used in contexts normally dominated by Swedish or German. Such anomalies show that people were fully aware of the importance of the choice of the relevant language with its relevant formulas, and could actively use different languages, formulas and oral registers in writing as means of expression.

Based on written evidence, our ability to study oral communication borders on the impossible. However, the written sources make the broad sphere of oral communication evident even in situations where letters and juridical documents had become common practice. In my presentation, I also discuss the role of written communication in a predominantly oral context.

The Battle of Kosovo (1389) in Oral Epic Tradition: Story Models, Forms, Ideologies

Sonja Petrović, University of Belgrade

Paper presented at Traditional and Literary Epics of the World: Textuality, Authorship, Identity, the Kalevipoeg 150, organized by the Estonian Literary Museum and the Institute for Cultural Research and Fine Arts, University of Tartu, 29th–30th November 2011, Tartu, Estonia.

Oral epic tradition about the Battle of Kosovo (28th June 1389) started soon after the battle. After the Serbian and Turkish armies clashed on a battlefield near Priština, Sultan Murad was struck down by the sword of a Serbian nobleman Miloš Obilić, and the Serbian Prince Lazar was captured and killed. Both Lazar and Murad were canonised and praised in cult texts. The contemporary sources testify to the confusing rumours and controversial versions of the outcome of the battle. The appearance of rumours points to the early development of oral tradition, which, as a channel of information, preserved, transmitted and invented narratives on the protagonists of the Kosovo Battle.

From 1389 to the end of the 18th century, at least 70 historical and legendary sources have been preserved in which different versions of the historical lore and accounts are embedded. Oral narratives and recounts of the battle were an important source for epic songs. A comparative analysis of sources and songs has shown that there are great similarities between them with regard to narrative units, motifs and formulae. Story models of epic songs, folk motifs and even fragments of epic verses are noted in many 15th and 16th century sources; however, the first collections of epic songs were made at the end of the 17th century. Narratives of the Battle of Kosovo in both sources and epic songs are marked ideologically, reflecting different political aspirations and the different historical and social background of various cultural milieux.

An analysis of the sources shows two basic, ideologically polarised versions in the years immediately following the battle – the Christian and the Ottoman. The secular Christian sources celebrate Miloš, the daring hero who proved that it was possible to oppose Ottoman power. The religious Christian sources honoured Prince Lazar as a martyr and defender of faith. On the other hand, Turkish chronicles celebrated Sultan

Murad as a conqueror and martyr for the faith. While in the early sources the narratives about the Kosovo Battle were brief and succinct, in time they became more extensive and were adapted to the folkloric and literary style.

Ideologically coloured narratives about the Kosovo Battle were transmitted orally and in writing, and influenced the development of epic songs, as well as imitations of epics. From the end of the 17th century, some 400 songs were collected in the form of episodic forms (80–300 verses) and integral epic forms (200–2500 verses). Integral epic songs mainly develop the Christian model of the defamed hero who kills the Turkish emperor, expanded by the motifs of Lazar's capture and the Vuk Branković's treachery. Some typically epic motifs have been added to these episodes: omens and prophetic dreams foretelling the death of the heroes and the downfall of the kingdom, the heroicization of the warriors, and Miloš's burial at the feet of Prince Lazar. A small number of integral epic songs are strongly influenced by Murad's religious cult and narrate his campaign, killing and martyrdom. Episodic songs expand only the Christian model and form a kind of epic cycle. They are concentrated around Miloš's adventures prior to the battle and Prince Lazar's epic life (his wedding and link with the Nemanjić dynasty, the building of Ravanica). Episodic songs expand, add to or explain the pivotal motifs, or share in the epic biography of the heroes through formulaic themes and models: Murad's challenge, Lazar's response, the supper at which Lazar suspects Miloš of treachery, Miloš's pledge to kill Murad, the spying on the Turkish troops, the mustering of the army, the choice of the heavenly kingdom, the army taking the Eucharist, Lazar's curse, the betrothal of the heroes on the eve of the battle, a sister who tries to hold back her brothers, and the hero who arrives too late. The last segment of the cycle consists of retrospective descriptions of

the battle through reports from ravens or wounded servants, then the events after the battle are narrated: the wailing of the betrothed maiden on the battlefield, the death of the mother pining for her sons, and the miracle of the joining of Prince Lazar's head to his body.

Literary attempts to devise an epopée remained at the merging of episodes from folk songs into a whole, with varying success. Not infrequently, verse and prose were combined to complete the artistic picture. Under the

influence of these compiled and devised epopées, the epic singers continued to make up their own versions of integral epic songs in the second half of the 19th century and in the 20th century. In these songs, the backbone of the action consists of the same narrative models noted in the earliest sources of the Battle of Kosovo. Therefore, independently of the long or short form of tradition, epic narratives have been passed on for hundreds of years as semantically coded or re-coded ideological information.

Published Articles

Circum-Baltic Mythology? – The Curious Case of the Theft of the Thunder Instrument (AT 1148b)

Frog, University of Helsinki

Paper published in Archaeologia Baltica 15, special issue: Archaeology, Religion and Folklore in the Baltic Sea Region, Daiva Vaitkevičienė & Vyktas Vaitkevičius (eds.), pp. 78–98. Available at: http://www.ku.lt/leidykla/leidiniai/Archaeologia_BALTICA/Archaeologia_BALTICA_15.pdf

The myth or tale of the theft of the thunder-instrument from the thunder-god by his adversary, known as tale-type ATU 1148b, is encountered almost exclusively in the Circum-Baltic. It is found in Germanic, Sámic, Finnic and Baltic cultures. It is otherwise only encountered in one early Greek source of questionable cultural provenance. This paper reviews the evidence of the tradition in different cultures, with a reassessment of the Germanic traditions, which have often been given priority.

This article approaches ATU 1148b as a Circum-Baltic phenomenon. Distinct forms of ATU 1148b in each culture's traditions are discussed as reflecting socio-historical processes. Emphasis is given to patterns of social use and how these are conditioned by relationships to other traditions and conceptions in each cultural milieu. The evolution of the tradition into its various forms is considered as the outcome of a long

and dynamic process of interaction between cultures. This development makes it unreasonable to attribute the Circum-Baltic traditions and forms exclusively to either Finno-Ugric or Indo-European traditions. It is proposed that ATU 1148b is best approached as a Circum-Baltic phenomenon and representative of a Circum-Baltic mythology dependent on historical processes of linguistic-cultural interaction and exchange.

The aetiology of thunder on which the narrative is dependent is briefly discussed – i.e. that thunder is produced by an object which can be stolen and unwittingly returned to the god, and can also literally or metaphorically be 'played', but only by the god owing to his exceptional physical strength. The foundation of this myth remains obscure. Etymological and comparative evidence is surveyed leading to the hypothesis that in an early cultural era, presumably prior to the establishment of aetiologies of thunder

dependent on iron-working technologies, there was a widespread aetiology of thunder deriving from a hand-mill, and which was sufficiently central to become established in the lexicon of the mythology in multiple cultures. This presents the possibility that the aetiology was associated with technological developments paralleling an alternative aetiology which spread through the Circum-Baltic in connection with iron-working as a technology.

It is proposed that the concentration of ATU 1148b across diverse cultures in the Circum-Baltic is at least partially attributable to the maintenance of corresponding mythic narratives in adjacent cultures. This phenomenon at the level of mythological narrative or plot is thus compared to parallels in the persistence and form of genres and stylistic priorities that appear to exhibit isoglosses in the Circum-Baltic region.

The Flying Noaidi of the North: Sámi Tradition Reflected in the Figure Loki Laufeyjarson in Old Norse Mythology

Triin Laidoner, University of Aberdeen

Paper to be published in Scripta Islandica 63 (2012): 59–91.

This article considers possible Sámi influences on Old Norse mythology, specifically, the possible connection of aspects of Sámi *noaidevuohta* practice with the complex mythological figure of Loki Laufeyjarson. The focus is placed on the dual and ambivalent nature of this figure, qualities which have always made it impossible for him to be placed in a clear-cut framework and suggest that perhaps we are dealing with a changeable figure. The written sources are briefly examined as are possibly connected archaeological finds and place-names that shed light on Loki and point towards his early existence in the northern parts of Europe.

Following an analysis of characteristically Sámi features which seem to be inherent in Loki, his character is explained in the light of the *noaidi* tradition. The suggested perspective is that Loki might be better understood in the context of the *noaidi* figures – and perhaps through his role as a trickster – that are found in a number of circumpolar cultures, including the Sámi. This encourages a novel approach to Loki from which tentative conclusions are drawn about his erratic nature and his independent development in the northern parts of Scandinavia from the very outset.

‘The Matter of Hrafnista’

Helen F. Leslie, University of Bergen.

Paper published in Quaestio Insularis 11 (2010): 169–208.

This paper considers the evidence for a body of oral tradition surrounding the family of the men of Hrafnista reflected in *Ketil saga hængs*, *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, *Örvar-Odds saga* and *Áns saga bogsveigis*. It attempts to ascertain which parts of their stories might stem from a common tradition about the men of Hrafnista that would, at one point, have been exclusively in oral circulation. Furthermore, it argues that *Áns saga bogsveigis* should indeed be counted as

belonging properly to this group, although it has been discounted by some scholars.

That there must have been a tradition surrounding the *Hrafnistumenn* [‘the men of Hrafnista’] is shown by the fact that the protagonists are mentioned in the *Hrafnisutmenn* sagas that do not bear their names – i.e. in *Egils saga* and in *Landnámabók*. The narratives about the characters, their descendants and the objects they are associated with therefore are examined in order to attempt to determine

whether these reveal any evidence of the existence of an overall tradition about the *Hrafnistumenn*.

The material is also considered with a view to determining whether they preserve memories of events that actually happened or other social realities. In the *Hrafnistumenn* sagas, this is mainly found in the description of places and travel routes, and also of the food supply in Hálögaland.

Most indicative of a continuum of tradition surrounding the *Hrafnistumenn* is when the same characters or events are recounted in

different sagas, allowing the versions to be compared. Close wording between the sagas indicates textual borrowing, that likely happened during the transmission of the sagas in their written form. The continuum formed can be concluded to be one of an entire story tradition as whole, and that the four sagas should be read together. The findings also suggest that, while the sagas are not historical, there is a latent possibility that the fictive elements of the texts may be constructed around a kernel of truth.

Reflections of Belief Systems in Karelian and Lithuanian Laments: Shared Systems of Traditional Referentiality?

Eila Stepanova, University of Helsinki

Paper published in Archaeologia Baltica 15, special issue: Archaeology, Religion and Folklore in the Baltic Sea Region, Daiva Vaitkevičienė & Vyintas Vaitkevičius (eds.), pp. 128–143. Available at: http://www.ku.lt/leidykla/leidiniai/Archaeologia_BALTICA/Archaeologia_BALTICA_15.pdf

The objective of this article is to open a discussion of relationships between Karelian and Lithuanian lament traditions as representative examples of Finnic (otherwise known as “Balto-Finnic”) and Baltic traditions, respectively. Both traditions maintained *rites de passage* as central contexts of lamenting and women ritual specialists as lamenters. Both are improvisational – even ritual laments incorporate situationally specific improvisations. I will focus on representations of vernacular religion or “belief systems” as these are reflected through the poetic features, images and motifs of both Karelian and Lithuanian funeral laments.

Finnic lament traditions were found primarily in Orthodox areas and were exclusively performed by women. Both ritual and occasional laments were found among Karelians and Vepsians, in Ingria among the Ižors and Votes, and among the Seto of south-eastern Estonia. The main feature of Finnic laments is that their special poetic idiom is not easily comprehensible to the uninitiated listener. In Karelian laments, relatives, intimate people, as well as certain objects and phenomena are never named directly. Instead of direct names, coded metaphorical expressions or circumlocutions were used.

The language and performance of laments conforms to certain conventions such as alliteration, parallelism, as well as employing an abundance of plural and diminutive-possessive forms. This poetry was not subject to fixed meter. The primary organizational units were based on the rhythms of melodic phrases of varying length and were marked by a consistent pattern of alliteration.

The Lithuanian lament tradition, like the Karelian tradition, was an important part of the life cycle of the individual and of the ritual life of the community, where it maintained a role in funerals, weddings, and perhaps in other areas of life as well. These traditions are rooted in a pre-Christian past, and yet persisted through the process of Christianization up to the present day. As in the Karelian tradition, Lithuanian laments are improvised poetry performed by women with a recitative melody, astrophic form, and have the essential poetic features of parallelism, diminutive forms, epithets and metaphors, and rhetorical questions; rather than metered lines and stanzas, the poetics develop around syntactic periods similar to Karelian laments.

In this study, representations of vernacular religion reflected through the poetic features of lament traditions are approached on three levels: 1) on the level of stylistic features; 2)

on the level of metaphoric or formulaic language and expressions; and 3) on the level of motifs employed in funeral laments. The traditions of Karelian and Lithuanian laments, as well as Lithuanian and Latvian folk songs, share numerous similar features. These features occur on all levels, from the elementary aspects of poetic language (their stylistic and grammatical features, poetic images and metaphors), to larger motifs and more comprehensive aspects of ritual activities. This shows that although the language of the tradition was different in each culture, they were utilizing remarkably

similar systems of traditional referentiality. These systems of traditional referentiality are necessarily rooted in the history of each tradition, drawing on its past in applications of “word power” in the present. Moreover, these traditions reflect common conceptions of death and the otherworld, where the ancestors of the community meet the newly deceased. If the sources accessible to me prove to be generally representative of the tradition, then the Karelian and Lithuanian laments appear to share certain significant features of mythology, worldview and beliefs, which are unlikely to be accidental.

PhD Projects

Entangled Worlds: Archaeologies of Ambivalence in the Viking Age

Leszek Gardela, University of Aberdeen

Dissertation defended for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology at the Department of Archaeology, University of Aberdeen on the 21st May 2012.

Supervisors: Professor Neil S. Price (University of Aberdeen) and Dr Peter Jordan (University of Aberdeen).

Opponents: Professor Andrew Reynolds (University College London), Professor Stefan Brink (University of Aberdeen).

During the last decade, the research paradigms in Viking-Age scholarship have undergone a significant change. Textual scholars and archaeologists have begun to collaborate more closely than before, engaging in an open yet critical dialogue, which among other things has opened new possibilities in examining the notions of belief and ritual practices and their practitioners in the past.

Today, it is frequently argued that the Scandinavian societies of the late Iron Age, in a perceptual sense, lived in what could be regarded as an ‘ensouled world’ where the ‘sacred’ could manifest itself in a wide range of forms – in places, beings and objects. With the assistance of textual sources (mostly in the form of Old Norse written accounts, but also other comparative evidence from other areas of the early medieval world), archaeologists

are trying to get a more detailed understanding of those archaeological remains from the Viking Age that seem to be material reflections of the multivariate beliefs people held at that time.

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest, especially from Scandinavian scholars, in the archaeology and anthropology of early medieval ritual specialists.¹ This thesis is intended to be a new contribution to the debate on the social role and especially to the social perception of such individuals. On the basis of the available textual accounts, as well as broad archaeological evidence, it is argued that the approaches to and the multiple understandings of these individuals, as well as the different forms of tools of their trades were, and are bound to be today, suffused with the notion of ‘ambivalence’.

The concept of ‘ambivalence’ is a common theme in the studies of past beliefs and it was originally introduced in the history of religions by Rudolf Otto in his famous work *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry Into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (1958 [1923]). In later years it was taken up by other scholars, most notably Mircea Eliade (e.g. 1987, 1996, 2000 [1937]; see also Allen 2002). ‘Ambivalence’, in the understanding of Otto, could be seen in the way humans think and experience the ‘sacred’. The ‘sacred’ may arouse both profound fascination, but also fear or even terror. In relation to the concept of ‘ambivalence’, Otto also introduced the notion of *mysterium fascinans* and *mysterium tremendum*, the latter of which he defined in the following way:

The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its ‘profane’, non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements of intoxicated frenzy, to transport and to ecstasy. It has its wild and demonic forms and can sink to an almost grizzly horror and shuddering. It has crud, barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again it may be developed into something beautiful and pure and glorious. (Otto 1958 [1923]: 12–13.)

In this thesis, the concept of ‘ambivalence’ is discussed with regards to three themes: the treatment and the perception of the dead, the perception of ritual specialists and the perception of their ritual objects. These are briefly summarized below.

Ambivalence with Regard to the Treatment and Perception of the Dead

Chapter 1 (“Prolegomena”) and Chapter 2 (“Funerary Diversity and Deviance in the Viking Age”) serve as theoretical and empirical introductions to the further debates on ritual specialists. Therein arguments are

given for the immense diversity with regards to the Old Norse beliefs and especially mortuary practices in the Viking diaspora. I argue that extreme caution is needed when one tries to evaluate and interpret the intentions of mourners responsible for composing particular kinds of burials, and that there is a necessity to acknowledge their multivalence. In Central-European and Anglo-Saxon archaeology, the terms ‘atypical’ and ‘deviant burials/graves’ have frequently been employed in studies of what is today regarded as unusual funerary behaviour (i.e. prone burial, decapitation, stoning the corpse, mutilation etc.). Occasionally, the terms ‘deviant grave’ or ‘atypical grave’ have also been used in the Viking context in relation to graves that, to their interpreters, demonstrate some signs of ‘oddity’. In my discussion, I argue that, contrary to the assumptions of many modern scholars, the so-called ‘deviant graves’ do not always have to indicate that the deceased individual was treated with contempt in life or upon death. On the basis of textual evidence and comparative archaeological evidence, it may be inferred that what we would today regard as ‘violence’ or ‘oddity’, may have in the past in fact signaled the utmost respect. In Viking-Age Scandinavia, the peculiar or (to our minds) odd treatment of the body may not always suggest that the particular person was regarded as malevolent, but rather signal fear of what might become of them (or what they might ‘transform’ into) after the moment of death. I therefore suggest that some unusual burial practices may be a form of ‘communicating’ certain social insecurities or superstitions and be a form of ‘negotiating’ the multivalent and fluid identities of the deceased.

Chapter 3 (“The Archaeology of Late Iron-Age Ritual Specialists”) is devoted to the examination of different factors that are taken into account when contemporary archaeologists try to interpret some of the so-called ‘deviant graves’ as belonging to Viking-Age ritual specialists. In my discussion, I adopt a rather critical approach to such interpretations and argue that a significant proportion of them are either completely *ad hoc* and ungrounded (for

example they have no actual reflection in the available archaeological material or they are based on archaeological data that is highly problematic and published nearly over a century ago in a rudimentary manner) or are based purely on modern-day preconceptions of what ritual specialists and their graves ‘should look like’ – as implied by popular culture, novels, films etc. Despite my criticisms, however, I maintain the opinion that it may nonetheless be plausible to interpret some graves as those of ritual specialists, but in such endeavors extreme caution is always needed. It is vital that studies of this kind are conducted on material that is both well preserved and professionally published. Additionally, it may also be valuable to take into account the wider context of the particular burial evidence and compare or contrast it with other sources (both archaeological and textual) from not only Viking-Age Scandinavia, but also from other areas of early medieval Europe.

Ambivalence in the Perception of Viking-Age Ritual Specialists

After reevaluating the different problems associated with the archaeology of early medieval ritual specialists, in Chapter 4 (“Ambivalent Beings: Death by Stoning and Burial under Stones”) I examine various social responses to such individuals as recorded in the Old Norse written accounts. Special attention was given to the motif of ‘stoning’ *seiðr*-working individuals and other beings related to magic practices or endowed with magic qualities. I argue that this particular motif of stoning may have some concrete parallels in the archaeological material. On the basis of an extensive comparative study that employs archaeological, historical and (occasionally) folkloristic sources, I suggest that it is not unlikely that some of the deceased individuals whose bodies were purposefully covered with stones were indeed regarded as people dealing with magic. However, I also explicitly stress that this interpretation is only one of several possibilities.

My detailed analysis of the archaeological material from Viking-Age Scandinavia, supplemented by comparative evidence from

early medieval England and Poland, shows that in fact every ‘stoned’ grave demonstrates different features with regards to the buried individuals themselves (in an anthropological sense – e.g. age, gender and other physical characteristics), and also to the objects placed alongside them and the overall, widely understood external and internal composition.



Figure 1. An artistic reconstruction of grave A505 from Trekroner-Grydehøj, Sjælland, Denmark. Illustration by Mirosław Kuźma. © Leszek Gardela and Mirosław Kuźma.

Ideally, as I argue, each grave of this kind should be approached individually, since it seems that each offers a different story (or stories) that could be ‘read’ from it. In my final conclusions, I postulate that all such considerations and attempts at providing deeper interpretations are only substantiated in the instances when the graves are both well preserved and documented. In my analyses of the burial evidence from Viking-Age Scandinavia, only graves that were excavated relatively recently and/or which were described in detail in the archaeological literature were taken into consideration. In selected cases it was possible to actually consult the evidence and new interpretations

of it with the original excavators (with special thanks to Dr Tom Christensen and Dr Jens Ulriksen from Roskilde Museum and to Dr Dan Carlsson from Gotland University). The new studies of the ‘stoned’ graves conducted as part of this doctoral research project also allowed the creation of nine artistic reconstructions aimed at demonstrating how the graves may have appeared before they were back-filled. The reconstructions were exclusively prepared for my thesis by the Polish artist-illustrator Mirosław Kuźma.

Ambivalence in the Perception of Viking-Age Ritual Objects

As argued, the notion of ambivalence may also be related to objects. Therefore, Chapter 5 (“Ambivalent Objects: A Biography of Magic Staffs”) is devoted to the idea of a ‘magic staff’ in the Viking Age and, as before, the discussion involves an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach. At its core is the examination of textual evidence for the existence of such objects and also their alleged archaeological analogues from prehistory to modern times. The concluding interpretations, supplemented by a detailed empirical and experimental study (included in Appendices 4 and 5), show that some of the iron rods considered may have indeed been perceived by Viking-Age individuals as ritual tools. However, given the possibilities of using these objects for multiple purposes and also the fact that their physical forms have so many associations (practical or symbolic) with other items, it is difficult to determine which items specifically may have served as magic staffs. The conclusion reached is that they should be seen as ambivalent or even multivalent objects – both in the past and today. What they represented in the past may have been *intended* as a matter of interpretation and it the same holds true today.

The last Chapter 6 (Entangled Worlds: Archaeologies of Ambivalence in the Viking Age) concludes the thesis and offers some new research avenues.

Exclusive Illustrations and Appendices

The thesis is lavishly illustrated and in addition to the chapters summarized above it

includes over 160 pages of appendices. Appendix 1 contains nine artistic reconstructions of early medieval ‘deviant graves’ from Sweden (grave Bj. 959 from Birka; grave 19/89 from Fröjel in Gotland), Denmark (the Gerdrup grave; grave A505 from Trekroner-Grydehøj; graves P and T from Bogøvei), Iceland (Grave Kt-145: 2 from Vað, Suður Múlasýsla), Poland (Grave 146 from Cedynia, Pomorze Zachodnie) and England (Grave 5056 from Raunds Furnells, Northamptonshire). Appendices 2 and 3 contain handlists of all early medieval ‘stoned’ graves from Scandinavia, Iceland and Poland known to the author. Appendix 4 is a detailed catalogue of 33 alleged magic staffs from the Viking-Age supplemented by new, high-quality photographs that were taken by the author during the period between 2008–2011 in archaeological museums in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Ireland. Appendix 5 discusses a modern replica of one of the alleged magic staffs (the staff from Gnesta in Sweden) which was commissioned for this doctoral research project and created by two professional re-enactors Grzegorz ‘Greg’ Pilarczyk and Łukasz ‘Einar’ Szczepański. In addition, Appendix 5 also seeks to examine the possible uses of similar objects through a discussion of a range of experiments conducted, where the alleged staff was employed as a roasting spit and a distaff.



Figure 2. A reconstruction of an alleged magic staff from Gnesta, Sweden. The reconstruction was made by Grzegorz ‘Greg’ Pilarczyk (the bronze fittings) and Łukasz ‘Einar’ Szczepański (the iron shaft). Photo by Kamil Stachowiak.

Notes

1. Cf. Adolfsson & Lundström 1993, 1995; Price 2002; Solli 2002; Raudvere 2003; Artelius 2005; Back Danielsson 2007; Graner 2007; Sundqvist 2007; Gardela 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Pentz, Panum Baastup, Karg & Mannering 2009; but see also important studies of Dillmann 2006; Heide 2006; Tolley 2009.

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Charms, Prayers, Amulets: Verbal Magic and Daily Life in Medieval and Early Modern Bulgaria

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Research project undertaken for the completion of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University (Budapest), and the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu, scheduled for completion in 2013.

Supervisors: Professor Gerhard Jaritz (Central European University) and Professor Gábor Klaniczay (Central European University); Professor Ülo Valk (University of Tartu) and Dr. Jonathan Roper (University of Tartu).

The source material for my doctoral dissertation project consists of medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms. These are texts of variable length and regarded as typical representatives of apotropaic verbal magic. They are written in Old Church Slavonic, preserved in manuscripts and on amulets, and dated from 9th to 18th century. The content of the charms covers three topics: health care, protection (against evil, against forces of nature and against disasters) and the provision of good luck and success in different activities.

In broader terms, the topic of my dissertation is verbal magic as a crossing-point, where 'our world' and the 'otherworld' intersect. More specifically, my thesis is an interdisciplinary study of medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charm and amulets, and their role and application in human quotidian life and culture. Verbal magic and verbal charms

are a cultural near-universal (perhaps, even a universal), a way of coping with ill health, with misfortune, and with anxiety about success in fields from agriculture to love. This is a fair claim to their significance. (Roper 2009: xiv.)

Based on concrete data (Roper 2005: 52), my aim is to initiate and urge a discussion of medieval and early modern Bulgarian verbal charms as complex cultural phenomena, related to the contexts of both the supernatural and the quotidian. The focus is on the charms not so much as pieces of texts, but more as factors, products, elements and instruments of this rich and diverse supernatural-daily life milieu.

My thesis also relates and examines together verbal charms from both manuscripts and amulets, addressing these against the background of different contexts. To my

knowledge, no such study on this particular source material has been conducted so far, although both the topic and the data require and deserve serious interdisciplinary research.

Ritual activity now requires systematic investigation, not least in the historical periods for which we have more background information. (Merrifield 1987: 194.)

This statement is even more relevant to the field of verbal magic and charming texts and practices. My research questions here are:

- How broad is the network of supernatural and quotidian?
- How do the connections between them work?
- What are the interrelations between verbal charms, amulets and their contexts?
- What is the *modus operandi* of the entire verbal magic complex within the framework of everyday life?

To sum up, this dissertation is an attempt to get at the underlife of everyday life (Clark 1982: viii) and at the magical underworld (Merrifield 1987: 119) of verbal charms and amulets. In addition, the dissertation aims to examine and reveal if these are really an underlife and an underworld, or simply different aspects of the human life and human world. Among other tasks, such an attempt requires entering deeply into the territory of mentalities, which are elusive and difficult to seize. Nevertheless, such a difficult task is a worthy mission of cultural history, and surely its results are interesting and noteworthy. "What is needed is an open mind and an appreciation of the great diversity of human behaviour" (Merrifield 1987: 21).

Previous Bulgarian scholarship studied the medieval and early modern Bulgarian charms mainly from the perspective of philology and literary analysis, which resulted in the production of important and valuable research

pieces. However, the field has other key aspects too: for example, the connections between medieval and early modern written verbal magic and folklore; also the place of medieval and early modern charms in everyday life, their practical functions, and their roles in the multilayered complex of crisis management and coping system. Although often acknowledged by a number of Bulgarian scholars (Petkanova 1981: 14–18), all these questions have been relatively neglected. In my opinion, an interdisciplinary research investigation is very much needed, especially in the direction of cultural history. Therefore, my dissertation is an attempt to fill this gap. Rooted in cultural history, it includes also philology, history of magic, history of mentalities, archaeology, folklore and ethnology.

The dissertation has the aim to discuss the above-mentioned charms not in their linguistic, but in their cultural context. The thesis is arranged in the following several parts:

- A discussion and clarification of the Bulgarian terminology of verbal magic and charms
- A discussion of the methodological approaches to the source material and the research questions
- A presentation of the relevant Bulgarian scholarship and the starting points it provides
- A presentation of the source material, with a special emphasis of the charms' contexts of existence, variations and transmission
- A discussion of the functional aspect of the charms
- A presentation and discussion of the roles of the supernatural agents and the mentality behind the charms
- A discussion of the verbal charms and the amulets as representative of *Fachliteratur* and as practical instruments of crisis management and coping strategies
- A presentation of the different roles of verbal charms in crisis rites and crisis management (Honko 1979: 377–380)
- A synthesis of all of these pieces, drawing conclusions and relating to later folklore data.

The dissertation will also be provided with an appendix containing the original texts and the English translations of the most important charms.

In terms of methodology and theory, I put special emphasis and efforts into relating the Bulgarian source material to academic discussions on verbal magic, coming from different disciplines and different countries (including Hungary, Estonia, Finland and Russia). In my opinion, it is very important to situate the data about medieval and early modern Bulgarian charms within a theoretical framework, which is more interdisciplinary and more international (Kapaló 2011: passim). Moreover, in order to fully understand the cultural role and impact of medieval and early modern Bulgarian written verbal magic, it is crucial to examine the connections and parallels with folklore examples from a later period. As such comparisons and parallels run throughout the analytical parts of my dissertation, it appears as a step in this direction.

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